Schleiermacher

W. B. Selbie, M.A., D.D.

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SCHLEIERMACHER

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SCHLEIERMACHER

A CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY

BY

W. B. SELBIE, M.A., D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

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INTRODUCTION

It is hardly necessary to offer any apology for the appearance of a new book on Schleiermacher in English. In a series which deals with the work of outstanding modern theologians the name of Schleiermacher naturally comes first. He marks a parting of the ways, and to his work most recent movements in philosophical, historical, and dogmatic theology owe both inspiration and direction. This has led in Germany to a great revival of interest in the man and his teaching, and the output of literature on the subject of recent years is bewildering in its variety. If at first his work was often misunderstood and insufficiently appreciated, time has had its revenge, and Schleiermacher may now be said to have come into his own. Among theologians of all schools the profound significance of his teaching is appreciated as never before. Their criticisms show the importance they attach to it, and if they criticize they are equally ready to sit at his feet. Both the followers of Ritschl and the men of the modern positive school, as well as many who are more orthodox in their standpoint, are accustomed to

quarry in Schleiermacher for the materials for that theological reconstruction which is one of the pressing needs of our time.

In England and among English theologians it must be confessed that Schleiermacher has been too much neglected. His main work has never been translated, though an excellent analysis of it has recently been published in America by Professor G. Cross. The Bibliography attached to this volume shows how scanty are the materials for studying him in English, in spite of the fact that abundant reference has to be made to him in every book on historical and dogmatic theology.

The present work is but an attempt to supply the deficiency. It may be claimed for it that it introduces the man and his theology to English readers in a rather fuller form than has been attempted hitherto. Considerations of space have made it impossible to plan the work on anything like the large scale which Schleiermacher himself loved. But the aim throughout has been, by means of quotation and paraphrase, to let the man speak for himself, while at the same time giving some indication of the place and influence which he occupies in the general development of theology. It is the opinion of the writer that, if the work of theological reconstruction is to be well done, it must be rooted and grounded in history. For this purpose Schleiermacher is all-important. He

represents the beginnings of the new method and the new spirit. At the present time doctrinal theology seems to have fallen into undeserved neglect. Criticism and history, indispensable as they are, cannot cover the whole field, and do not fulfil their function save as they lead to some constructive endeavour. In this respect Schleiermacher not only offers a splendid example, but even lays down many of the lines along which the new effort must proceed. It is in the hope that a fuller acquaintance with his work may help towards a better understanding of the present situation, and may give some impulse to the work of doctrinal reconstruction, that this book is issued.

The writer's obligations to many workers in the same field are recognized in the notes and references; but he would especially mention his indebtedness to the excellent translation of the Speeches on Religion by Professor Oman and to the summary of the *Glaubenslehre* by Professor Cross already alluded to. He would also thank his friend Principal Franks of Bristol for his kindness in reading the proofs, and for some valuable suggestions.

W. B. Selbie.

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SCHLEIERMACHER

CHAPTER I

THE MAN AND HIS TIME

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher may fitly be described as the Father of modern scientific theology. He lived in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, and covered a period which must always be regarded as a psychological moment in the history of human thought. It was a time of extraordinary excitement, intellectual, social, and religious. War and revolution were the birth-throes of a new age, and humanity was readjusting itself, not without pain and toil, to new and strange conditions. Among those who helped to lay firm and strong some of the foundation-stones of the new order must be reckoned the great Berlin preacher and professor who has been called the Plato and Origen of Germany.

It does not come within the scope of this work to describe the life of Schleiermacher save in brief and rapid outline. It was certainly very far removed from that condition of philosophic calm and detachment from mundane things which

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is often supposed to be characteristic of the German professor. His father was a regimental chaplain, and his mother, herself a daughter of the manse, was a woman of unusual piety and breadth of spirit. The father had been converted to spiritual religion by the Moravians, and he entrusted to them the early training of his son. Schleiermacher studied first in their school at Niesky in Upper Lusatia, and later at their college at Barby. With the Moravians Schleiermacher had close affinities, and, as we shall see later, owed them a deep debt. But his mind was too speculative and critical to accept guidance in matters of religion from any man or body of men. He had all the passion of an Erasmus for liberty. He broke with the Moravians at an early stage in his career, though without disturbing his friendly relations with them, and joined the University of Halle. After a two years' course there he went out into the world and began his self-appointed task of "attaining, by earnest research and patient examination of all the witnesses, to a reasonable degree of certainty and to a knowledge of the boundaries of human science and learning." At Halle he had come under the influence of the philosophy and theology of the Enlightenment (Aufklärung) and had studied Kant. These influences, working upon the early impressions derived from Herrnhut, determined quite clearly the bent of his own mind, and it is important to

understand, as his biographer Dilthey points out, that this had taken place before he became acquainted with the Romantic School or had studied Spinoza. As we shall see later, he owed much to these two sources of inspiration, but they were not original formative influences in shaping either his outlook or his method.

On leaving Halle Schleiermacher became private tutor in the family of Count Dohna at Schlobitten in East Prussia. Three years later (1794) he was ordained and accepted a post as assistant to his uncle at Landsberg. In 1796 he was appointed Chaplain to the Charité (hospital) in Berlin, where he remained till 1802. During the earlier part of this period he had the leisure which enabled him to work out his religious and philosophical position and to lay down the lines for his future teaching. The task before him was that of reconciling his religious experience, which, under Moravian influence and example, had been very real, with the critical philosophy which had won his intellectual consent. As we shall see more in detail later on, he found the solution of his problem in giving to the feeling, on which he believed his experience to be based, an equal importance with the ideas and theories arrived at by purely rational process. He so far agreed with Kant as to recognize that human knowledge is subject to serious limitations. But he insisted that ideas which have no correspondence with sense-experience, and therefore no objective

validity, may yet have a real religious value, if they can be shown to be based on the inner life of feeling. It was during his chaplaincy in Berlin, and partly in defence of the position which we have outlined, that he published the first and in some respects most important of his books: *Speeches on Religion Addressed to its Cultured Despisers* ("Reden über die Religion, an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern"). This book represents a definite revolt against the Enlightenment, and was written under the influence of the Romantic School, with the members of which Schleiermacher had come into close contact in Berlin. The two Schlegels, Tieck, and Novalis were among his companions and literary advisers in those days. Their hold of him, however, was only temporary, and it was rather as to the form than as to the substance of his thought that he was in their debt. The teaching of the *Reden* is altogether original. It marks the transition in German theology from a barren rationalism to a warmer and more positive faith. To the younger men of the time it came as a prophetic message and helped them to rediscover in religion that which had a function and a value of its own independent of culture and criticism. It was, as Schlegel said, "a work of infinite subjectivity," revealing its author's individuality and growing out of his experience. Certain modifications of its original form were introduced in later editions, and are interesting as indicating

the movement of the writer's mind.[1] Within the circle of the Romantic School the book at once gained great popularity. It was said to have "made religion fashionable." But in the Church it was viewed with suspicion as having caused too marked a breach with the past, and as showing pantheistic tendencies. The criticisms were not altogether unfounded.

As Lichtenberger says,[2] "It is difficult to imagine the lively surprise which was caused by

[1] Cf. Otto Braun's *Einleitung* to the "Auswahl," p. lix. "Schleiermacher selbst hat die Reden 1806, 1821 und 1831 nochmals überarbeitet herausgegeben. Die späteren Fassungen zeigen bei genauer Untersuchung ziemlich einschneidende Änderungen. In der 2ten Auflage tritt das positive Christentum viel deutlicher hervor und vor allem hat sich der Religionsbegriff geändert. Seit 1801 nämlich hatte Schelling—z. T. angeregt durch die Reden, die ihn erst abgestossen, dann aber begeistert hatten—'Anschauung des Universums,' als Wesen der Philosophie bezeichnet—und so musste Schleiermacher, um die Selbständigkeit für die Religion zu retten, diesen Begriff aufgeben und den des Gefühls mehr hervorheben: die Anschauung überlässt er dem wissenschaftlichen Erkennen. Die Stellung von Religion und Wissenschaft zueinander erscheint sogar in der 2ten Auflage gerade umgekehrt, wie in der Ersten! Ausserdem ist—vermutlich unter dem Einfluss Platons—der Individualitätsbegriff aus seiner zentralen Stellung verdrängt." Cf. also A. W. Brown, *The Essence of Christianity*, p. 159. "A comparison of the first and second editions of the *Reden* shows a decided advance in the direction of the later positions. . . . Even in the first edition we find in germ most of the points of view which come to expression in the *Glaubenslehre*."

[2] *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 88.

the appearance of these Speeches of Schleiermacher. Those to whom they were properly addressed lent them but a superficial attention. Goethe obtained a splendid copy of the book, praised the cultured spirit of the author, and found that the style was neglected, that the religion recommended was too Christian, and that 'the whole ends in a wholesome serene repulsion.' Schelling sent his compliments to the author declaring that he postponed the study of the Speeches for a more convenient time. Fichte also observed an attitude full of reserve. Novalis, on the contrary, showed himself 'all penetrated, roused to enthusiasm, and on flame.' Jean Paul Richter found that Schleiermacher had given religion a new meaning—poetic, vague, and destined to conceal the old theological meaning. The general public saw in the Speeches a new assault of Romanticism on religion. The clergy in particular, were painfully roused and did not dissemble their irritation. Spalding himself could not restrain his anger. But the most hostile was Sack. He wrote a long epistle to Schleiermacher, in which he reproached him for his suspected social relations, for his separation of religion from morality, and for his abandonment of the idea of God and immortality. The work he declared to be only an ingenious apology for Pantheism, an oratorical exposition of Spinoza."

In 1800 Schleiermacher published his *Monologues* ("Monologen"), in which he developed his

moral philosophy. They were written under the influence of the subjective idealism of Fichte, and embody an attempt to set forth the meaning and worth of life from the individual point of view. He opposes Fichte's contention as to a general moral law binding on all, with the belief that every human being should express himself in his own individual way. This book also shows Schleiermacher's dependence on his own subjectivity. At the time when it was written he was still a student in temperament and outlook, with but little knowledge of the world, and too marked a tendency to judge everything from the standpoint of his individual experience.

In 1802 he left Berlin for a time, under the stress of certain private troubles with which we are not here concerned, and accepted a pastorate at Stolpe in Pomerania. It was a kind of exile, but the quiet of the place and its freedom from social and other distractions gave him a welcome opportunity to possess his soul and to further his studies. Here he wrote *Outlines of a Criticism of all Previous Theories of Morals* ("Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre"). His attack on previous systems was on the ground of what he calls "their scientific incompleteness and worthlessness."[1] To carry out this project he read very widely, and though he seemed to pride himself in not giving in the book any constructive account of his own theory of morals

[1] Letter 171.

he certainly laid the foundations of it, and in his criticisms of others quite sufficiently indicated his own point of view. The same object was served by the translation of Plato which he began at this period. It was an immense task, which he carried through successfully as a labour of love. He writes of the work:[1] "I am daily learning to understand Plato better, so that at last no one will find it easy to equal me herein. The prophetic quality in man, and the fact that the best that is in him originates in vague presentiments, has become clearer to me than ever through my experience in regard to Plato. So little did I understand him upon the whole, when I first read his works at the Universities, that the meaning merely floated before me like a misty vapour: and yet how I loved and admired him even then!" His work on Plato not only gave to Schleiermacher an abiding place among German classical scholars, but profoundly influenced the philosophical direction of his own mind. Though the work was begun in co-operation with Schlegel, the partnership was soon broken, and for its completed form Schleiermacher alone was responsible. At the same time he was much occupied in preaching and in teaching the young, and he now began to show that interest in Church organization and reform that remained with him all through his days. In his Church connections he was not altogether happy,

[1] Letter 164.

and he became a preacher largely because he found in the pulpit his best available means of influencing public opinion. He was all for freedom both of belief and life within the Church, and he interpreted the ministry in a broad prophetic sense. He made little of the differences between the Reformed and Lutheran communions and thought that they would both stand to gain more than they could lose by drawing closer together.

In 1804 Schleiermacher was elected Professor Extraordinary of Theology and Philosophy in his own University of Halle. In this centre of rationalism he carried on his work quietly and steadily, though not without becoming an object of suspicion to some of the leaders both in the University and the Church. His lectures were extraordinarily alive and relevant, and soon won for him a considerable influence in philosophical and theological circles. He was much concerned with the philosophy of Schelling, which, as modified by his colleague Heinrich Steffens, proved entirely to his taste. His close connection with Steffens makes it not improbable that the latter had some influence on the development of his thought. But the battle of Jena broke up the University in 1806, and for a time Schleiermacher retired to the island of Rügen. He was brought here into rude contact with the realities of war, and the sufferings of his country deeply stirred him. He became a patriot, recognizing

that "the lives of all of us are rooted in German freedom and German sentiment and they are at stake." But his patriotism was by no means blind. He did not conceal his dislike of the tortuous policy of Prussia which led at last to her crushing defeat by Napoleon, and he had strong democratic sympathies. But all the same he could not be induced to submit to foreign domination, and when Jérome Bonaparte was made King of Westphalia he took it for granted that his career in Halle was at an end.

In the winter of 1807 Schleiermacher removed to Berlin. There he took part in founding the New University, and in time was appointed to the chair of Theology, and also to give lectures on philosophy and the history of philosophy. Shortly after his appointment he published the *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums*, in which he set forth his ideals and methods, and sought to relate the various branches of theological study to one another and to a central guiding principle. At the time this was a new and much-needed exercise, and though the treatment of the subject is open to criticism, it has not yet been entirely superseded. He pointed out the scientific character of theology and its value for the religious life. He divided the study into its philosophical, historical, and practical aspects, and showed the relation of the subordinate studies to each of these and to one another.

We have now reached the period of greatest

activity and fruitfulness in Schleiermacher's life. In the spring of 1809 he married Henrietta von Willich, the widow of an old and dear friend, with whom, in spite of much disparity in years, he lived very happily. His letters to this lady, after the death of her husband and before their union, are singularly strong and beautiful. They show a deeply sensitive spirit, wide sympathies and a very genuine religious temper. His wife bore him five children, and he adopted two others. For the rest of his days the home circle became the centre of his life, and the means of friendships which profoundly affected the course of public affairs both in the political and literary spheres. Henceforth the man's interests were divided between the home, the professor's chair, and the pulpit. He was appointed to the Trinity Church in Berlin, and his preaching there became one of the notable features of the time. He spoke extempore, but with extreme precision and clearness of style, and great richness and flow of language. He appealed to the good sense and better feeling of his audiences rather than to their passions, and his whole method was solemn and persuasive rather than emotional. Bishop Eilert [1] has left a remarkable description of one of his sermons preached to the volunteers in the war of liberation which broke out after Napoleon's Russian campaign. He says: "Then in this holy place and at this solemn hour, stood the physically

[1] *Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1813 und 1814.*

so small and insignificant man, his noble countenance beaming with intellect, and his clear, sonorous, penetrating voice, ringing through the overflowing church. Speaking from his heart with pious enthusiasm, every word penetrated to the heart, and the clear, full, mighty stream of his eloquence carried every one along with it. His bold, frank declaration of the causes of our deep fall, his severe denunciation of our actual defects, as evinced in the narrow-hearted spirit of caste, of proud aristocratism, and in the dead forms of bureaucratism, struck down like thunder and lightning; and the subsequent elevation of the heart to God, on the wings of solemn devotion, was like harp tones from a higher world. The discourse proceeded in an uninterrupted stream, and every word was *from* the times and *for* the times. And when at last with the full fire of enthusiasm, he addressed the noble youths already equipped for battle, and next turning to their mothers, the greater number of whom were present, he concluded with the words : ' Blessed is the womb that has borne such a son, blessed is the breast that has nourished such a babe '— a thrill of deep emotion ran through the assembly, and amid loud sobs and weeping Schleiermacher pronounced the conclusive Amen." Schleiermacher's efforts however were not confined to stirring up patriotism. He played a real and practical part in consolidating his country and in resisting the conservative reaction that

followed on the conclusion of the war. He worked hard for education and Church reform, keeping always before him the desire to maintain liberty and spontaneity both in teaching and worship. It made no difference to him that he incurred unpopularity with the court party and with powerful interests. He went on his way happy in consciousness of doing what he believed to be right. His influence grew steadily and was by no means confined to those who came within his immediate entourage.

In 1821 and 1822 Schleiermacher published his *magnum opus*, a Systematic Theology (*Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche in Zusammenhange dargestellt*). The problem he sets himself is to relate the proximate and figurative expressions of feeling and of religious experience to the expressions which these have received in dogma, history, and creeds. These are not to be judged by the relation in which they may stand to each other, but by the relation of them all to the religious reality which lies behind them. The central theme of the work is the feeling of dependence which is made the foundation of religion. God is that upon which we depend. It is written in the true spirit of a Protestantism which asserts the independence of the reason even in matters of religion. In the breadth of its conception and the massiveness of its structure the work lays the foundation of all modern theology. By the

contemporaries of Schleiermacher it was certainly not appreciated and probably not understood. Rationalists and supernaturalists alike attacked it, and both found in it much to criticize. In its way, however, the book was epoch-making, and though its interest is now very largely historical we shall see, as we come to expound it, how it marks both a new departure and a new spirit in the interpretation of Christianity. Probably no work of the kind has been so suggestive and so fruitful in results.

Schleiermacher's views on things political and ecclesiastical brought him into disfavour with many of his own colleagues as with more important people. For this, which, as we gather from his letters, was a serious trouble to him, he found some compensation in the popularity won by his preaching and his University lectures. Crowds attended him whenever he preached, and he had as many as a hundred and forty students in some of his classes. His influence in Berlin grew steadily up to the close of his life.

In 1828 he visited England and preached in London. The following year a great sorrow came to him in the death of his only son—a wound, as he said, which never healed. He bore his pain manfully and continued writing and teaching, conscious himself that it was only for a little time. In 1834 he died full of years and of honours.

The life which we have thus sketched was an

uneventful one in externals. But the story of the inner man of Schleiermacher, as told in his letters and unveiled in his books, is a very remarkable one. He shows the union of an essentially pious soul with a philosophical mind. Anchored to an intense religious experience he let himself wander into wide fields of speculation. He was open to the various influences of his time; but he made his own environment and carved out a path for himself. Though in theology he was a pioneer, he did not detach himself from the needs and circumstances of his own day. He was never out of touch with the realities around him, but still less did he lose sight of that ideal world in which he lived and moved and had his being. His teaching has so far become the common property of modern theology that it is not altogether easy to grasp the real originality of the man and his work. It may be more possible to do this when we have studied more closely the influences to which he was subject and the material which he used.

We have already seen how the whole course of Schleiermacher's life and thought was shaped by his religious consciousness. He is an abiding illustration of the rather one-sided truth, " Pectus facit theologum." His system sprang out of his spiritual experience and was dominated throughout by his desire to give expression to that which he had seen and felt of the action of God in his own soul. There is no doubt that he owed this

temper of mind, in the first instance, to his early training among the Moravians, and he never failed to acknowledge the debt. His breach with them was caused by his intellectual independence, rather than by any revolt from their spirit or from their methods. In his brief autobiography Schleiermacher speaks of the " manifold internal religious conflicts " which he underwent even at this early period in his career. The following passage gives a vivid picture of his state of mind: " Now commenced another struggle generated by the views held among the United Brethren relative to the doctrines of the natural corruption of man and of the supernatural means of grace, and the manner in which these doctrines were interwoven with every discourse and every lesson —a struggle which endured almost as long as I remained a member of the congregation. My own experience furnished me with abundant evidence in favour of the truth of the first of these two chief pillars of the ascetic-mystic system, and at length I came to look upon every good action as suspicious, or as resulting merely from the force of circumstances. I was thus in that state of torture, with producing which our reformers have been so frequently taunted: my belief in the innate moral faculty of man had been taken from me, and as yet nothing had been substituted in its stead. For in vain I aspired after those supernatural experiences, of the necessity of which every glance at myself with

reference to the doctrine of future retribution convinced me—of the reality of which, *externally to myself*, every lesson and every hymn, yes, every glance at the Brethren, so attractive while under their influence, persuaded me. Yet me they seemed ever to flee, though at times I thought that I had seized a shadow of them at least, for I soon perceived that it was no more than the work of my own mind, the result of the fruitless straining of my imagination." [1] The letters which passed between Schleiermacher and his father at the time when he had decided to break with the Brethren, and was pleading to be allowed to enter the wider atmosphere of the University, show clearly enough the agony he suffered. But they also indicate the firmness of his determination to deliver himself from a bondage which he knew to be dangerous, and to give full play to the powers with which he felt himself to be endowed. At the same time they reveal the real piety of his disposition and his clinging affection for the worship and spiritual discipline of the Brethren. These things had at once aroused and satisfied his religious nature, and stood to him for an experience the strength and utility of which he never denied. It was this warmth of religious feeling which led him to estimate at its true value the dry and formal worship of the Church of his day, and to give to the religious emotions their due part in his

[1] *Life and Letters of Schleiermacher* (Rowan), p. 6.

preaching, his theology and his life. It would be an exaggeration to speak of Schleiermacher as indebted to, or as in any way representing, the evangelical revival. But it is certainly true that the tendencies which issued in that movement made themselves felt in his life. He struck out a new line in theology, because religion had come to mean to him more than a philosophy of the universe, and because he could not but seek in it that which made life as well as moulded thought. To him it was so real and so fruitful, so closely bound up with all that was best in his own sentiments and experience, that he could not but work from the foundation thus supplied.

Potent, however, as the influence of this early pietism became, it was only one among many factors that helped to determine Schleiermacher's mental development. We must not overlook the extraordinary fermentation of the times. The work of the illumination was practically done. But the hard rationalism and pedantry in which it had issued still remained and form the background of much of Schleiermacher's thinking and teaching. To him as to many others Kant was a deliverer from the dominion of an arid metaphysic, and the pioneer of a new and more hopeful tendency in religion. The Germany of his early years was deeply affected by the *Sturm und Drang* movement. Götz von Berlichingen on the one hand, and Werther on the other, represent two types of a senti-

mentalism that was sometimes strenuous and sometimes altogether unhealthy. It was part of a widespread effort of revolt. The French Revolution was in travail, and the spirit that produced that convulsion in France was working in the studies and class-rooms of Germany. It showed itself, not only in attacks on authority, but in a striving after the real that was altogether healthy, and full of promise.

This spirit affected Schleiermacher in many ways and through various channels. It was largely responsible for his political activities, for his passion for ecclesiastical reform and for his intellectual revolt against the merely orthodox in theology. But it was in the form of what is known as the Romantic movement that the spirit of the time first touched him, and produced the most lasting effect on his mental and religious outlook. Romanticism must be regarded as a tendency or fashion of thought rather than a school. It is elusive, complex, and very difficult to describe. It stands for a kind of culture touched with emotionalism. It involves an æsthetic view of life, the attempt to see the unknown and mysterious in the most familiar things. It means mysticism in religion and subjectivism in art. At its worst it is individualism run mad, divorced from all obligations of morality and knowing no standards save those of a rather sensuous taste. At its best it became the source of a most fruitful literary reflection

and criticism, and of a counter movement to the rationalism of the enlightenment which in the end deprived it of all real influence. It helped to deliver both art and literature from the deadening grasp of conventionalism and gave to creative genius the freedom and range needed for its full development. It brought imagination to bear upon life, turned prose into poetry, and evoked the deeper hidden meaning of things. In the poetry of Wordsworth at its best the Romantic spirit is well illustrated; and in religion and in the relation of men to the whole problem of life it exercised for a time a real and illuminating influence. At the same time it had within it the seeds of its own decay, and its history justifies the following severe judgment:[1] "The Romantic movement provokes the full strength of our opposition only when it takes that which has in art a certain justification and makes it fill and dominate life to the exclusion of everything else. It then becomes evident that the unfettered expansion of feeling is unable to give a satisfactory meaning to life; that the 'infinitely free subjectivity' lacks steadiness and virile force: that the vain mirroring of self and love of abstraction are a wearisome burden; and finally, that the contempt for morality, usually characteristic of this school, together with its incapacity to picture morality save in caricature, is merely a sign of its own shallowness. It becomes ever

[1] Eucken's *Problem of Human Life* (Eng. Trans.), p. 481.

more and more obvious that this vague subjectivity lacks spiritual depth, and that there is not much substance beneath all the shimmer and sparkle. As the movement develops, it is seen to be even more slight and worthless, more and more involved in subtleties of barren sentiment. This is why some of its more prominent representatives have had in the end to resort to external supports, and submit to some form of ecclesiastical authority, not indeed without casting about it a halo of romance in ways quite foreign to the historical spirit."

Schleiermacher has been described as a "Romantiker" in religion or in theology.[1] But it would be a mistake to press the designation too far. As we have already seen, he owed to the Romantic influence much of the impulse which set him against the enlightenment, and led to his individual new departure in theology.

[1] Cf. Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, pp. 14, 15. "Schleiermacher selbst war Romantiker und fühlte sich berufen, in dem Kreise seiner mit diesem Namen üblicher und berechtigter Weise bezeichneten Genossen der Religion, insonderheit der christlichen Religion, die Herzen zu gewinnen."

"Wenn es richtig ist, was ich ja zunächst nur erst behauptet habe, das die in Betracht gezogenen Richtungen der modernen Theologie sich in dem Sinne auf Schleiermacher als ihren Ausgangspunkt zurückführen lassen, dass sie da, wo Schleiermachers Religionsbegriff die dogmatische Methode in charakteristischer Weise beeinflusst hat, sich begegnen, so wird es nicht unberechtigt sein, sie daraufhin zusammen unter den Namen der 'Romantik in der Theologie,' zu stellen."

But he was never dominated by it, and its excesses he would have repudiated with horror. Traces of this influence may be found in the subjectivity of his early writings, and in the stress he lays on the work of self-consciousness and feeling in the expression and interpretation of religion. So far as externals are concerned, one is tempted to wish that he had followed the example of the Romantic writers a little more closely, and developed something of the richness and plasticity of style for which they became famous. It is true that his sermons show signs of a vivid imagination, and a real sense of oratory; and there is a swing and passion in some of the great passages of the *Reden* that leave nothing to be desired. But his purely theological writing is laboured and involved to a degree, and represents only his own serious temper and passion for truth. For, however much Schleiermacher owed to the Zeitgeist and to his various teachers and contemporaries, he always remains himself. How far he yielded in his earlier years to the glamour of Romanticism may be discovered by the curious in his *Confidential Letters on Schlegel's* "*Lucinde*," a work of which he lived to be ashamed and which only represents a momentary aberration on his part. The permanent effect of the movement upon him was, as we have seen, of a more wholesome kind. It helped him to realize and develop his individuality and gave to him a genuine literary and artistic impulse.

It was in those days something beyond the common that a writer on religion should be able to speak to the cultured in their own tongue, and obtain a hearing.[1]

If Romanticism affected in this way the form of Schleiermacher's teaching, its substance owed something to the work of Spinoza. In the interval between the publication of the *Reden* and the *Glaubenslehre* the influence of the Romantic School upon his thought sensibly declined, while that of his early philosophical training increased. Schleiermacher was never an out-and-out Spinozist, and always resented the charge of pantheism based on his use of part of the terminology of Spinoza's system. And, as has been pointed out elsewhere, the Spinoza he knew and reverenced was in some senses a creation of his own. There is no doubt that he owed to him a real intellectual inspiration, but his following of the sage was always corrected and conditioned by his use of Plato on the one hand, and of Kant on the other. It was, however, to Spinoza that he owed his description of the content of religious

[1] Cf. Windelband, *History of Philosophy* (Eng. Trans.), p. 697. "Schleiermacher's kindly nature, which was particularly skilful in fine and delicate adjustments, is developed especially in the attempt to harmonize the æsthetic and philosophical culture of his time with the religious consciousness. With delicate hand he wove connecting threads between the two, and removed in the sphere of feeling the opposition which prevailed between the respective theories and conceptions."

experience, the meagreness of which is one of the disappointing elements in his theology. In defining religious feeling as being ultimately a feeling of dependence, and in giving to it a physical rather than a moral and spiritual significance, he was undoubtedly influenced by Spinoza's "cognitio Dei intuitiva," which refers finite phenomena to the necessary Divine causality. It is from this source that Schleiermacher's own doctrine of God derives the somewhat hard and mechanical character which is its most serious defect. His failure to give full play to the conception of the Divine personality must be ascribed to the same cause. His study of Spinoza also affected his view of the Divine attributes which was based on Spinoza's interpretation of immanence on the one hand and substance on the other. The attributes do not represent any distinctions in God Himself, but only aspects of His relation to the universe. They serve to relate God to our consciousness. As Pfleiderer says:[1] "All these distinctions, therefore, are confined to the human consciousness of God, and have no foundation in the objective nature of God, which does not admit of any distinctive qualifications, as they would only contradict the infinity of God according to Schleiermacher: in full agreement with Spinoza's canon, 'Omnis determinatio est negatio.' An absolutely simple causality of this kind, in which there is no distinction between *posse* and

[1] *Development of Dogmatic Theology*, p. 112.

facere, *facere* and *velle*, *velle* and *scire*, nor any succession of acts and states, but everything is simply one eternal act; is, at all events, not a personality, nor can it scarcely be thought of as spiritual being, having nothing in common with anything which constitutes for us the spiritual: it is in reality simply operative power, like Spinoza's substance. From the first it has been remarked that this conception of God fails to meet the need of the Christian religious consciousness: nor was Schleiermacher able to bring it into harmony with the religious consciousness in any other way than by reducing the latter to the mere feeling of dependence thereby detracting from its moral side. It is, therefore, certain that Schleiermacher cannot be regarded as the unprejudiced interpreter of the universal, still less of the Christian, religious experience in his treatment of the primary ideas of religion and God, but that he has reduced them to the dimensions of his philosophical system." At the same time he is not altogether consistent, and as we shall see later, in his treatment of the revelation of God in Christ, he does much to fill out the rather bare formulas of his definition of God.

While, therefore, he owes much to his sources in elaborating his theological system as a whole, Schleiermacher remains thoroughly individual in his doctrinal position. This enabled him to make a silent, though much-needed, protest against the rigid orthodoxy of the Church of his day and gives

an added value and interest to his work for our own time. Once we can escape from the idea that truth in religion is the sole and exclusive possession of any creed or any sect, the light which is thrown upon it by the speculations of an acute and devout mind, like that of Schleiermacher, becomes of more and more importance.

His life is summed up by Otto Braun [1] in the following striking terms: "Schleiermacher was a moral and pedagogic genius. Through his efforts after reform he influenced and advanced his age in the most various spheres more deeply than other thinkers—he was a philosopher in the great sense of the word, as being a man who did not suffer the world to rest at the point where he found it, but who, in striving after the ideal brought it nearer to the ideal of his own creation. His life was guided by ideas, by ideas which he did not obtain from thought and speculation, but which developed themselves before his enquiring eye from the fulness of the world of appearance. Schleiermacher is by no means so consistent a theorist as was Fichte: but he far surpasses him in his delicate penetration of the content of experience with thought and understanding. Thus his philosophy was the more stimulating in its effects, in that it gave form and shape to ideas of permanent worth. Schleiermacher himself did very much to realize his ideal, and to unite idea and actuality in a

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. xcix.

truly human bond. It was not a school that he founded, but an epoch. He is a great man, for he cannot be replaced. From his writings and deeds there confronts us radiant a pure and complete humanity. In him a cheerful gentleness was combined with active manliness, and both united to form a harmony of the inner man that issued in a selfless devotion to the highest aims. Schleiermacher's greatest work was his own life."

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

SCHLEIERMACHER'S Philosophy of Religion is found in all its essential features in his *Speeches on Religion Addressed to the Cultured Among Its Despisers.* The book belongs to the writer's earliest period, when he was under the influence of the Romantic School, and in strong reaction against the Illumination. It underwent more than one revision in the course of which the pantheistic tendencies of the first edition were considerably modified.[1] Its author sought to remove from it the traces of his own immaturity, but claimed, and rightly, that his main positions were retained throughout. It is noteworthy that in the whole course of his intellectual career he never ceased to grow, and the stages of his growth are easily traceable. The positions laid down in the Speeches are elaborated and practically applied in the *Glaubenslehre*, but it is to the Speeches that we must look for the foundations of Schleiermacher's system. They are cast in an apologetic form and are directly addressed to the rationalist and sceptical spirit of the time. The

[1] There is a critical edition by Pünjer, Brunswick, 1879, which shows all the variations.

work marks a new departure in the study of religion as vindicating for it an independent place of its own in human development apart from, though not in separation from, knowledge or morality. It has had the most important consequences in that it brought out for the first time the true place of experience in religion. In this respect it may be said to have started a new epoch, and the results of it are with us to this day.

The book begins with an apology for bringing the subject of religion under the notice of cultivated men and women. They are interested in all matters which belong to the true life of the world, and they are willing to listen to any one who has devoted himself to the study of any such subject. Schleiermacher claims to speak to them as such an one. He is a member of an order, but he speaks rather for himself than for the order to which he belongs. He speaks, that is, rather as a prophet than as a priest, saying the thing that has been given him to say rather than what it is his business to say:[1] "As a man I speak to you of the sacred secrets of mankind according to my views—of what was in me as with youthful enthusiasm I sought the unknown, of what since then I have thought and experienced, of the innermost springs of my being which shall for ever remain for me the highest, however I be moved by the changes

[1] *Reden*, p. 3. This and other quotations from the Speeches are taken from Dr. Oman's translation.

of time and mankind. I do not speak from any reasoned resolve, nor from hope, nor from fear. Nor is it done from any caprice and accident. Rather it is the pure necessity of my nature: it is a divine call: it is that which determines my position in the world and makes me what I am. Wherefore even if it were neither fitting nor prudent to speak of religion, there is something which compels me, and represses with its heavenly power all those small considerations."

What Schleiermacher thus feels to be true of himself he feels also to be necessary for other men. The study of religion is required in order to lift them out of their low condition and to deliver them from absorption in mundane things. They are too much taken up with their self-consciousness, and need to have their horizon widened. The soul is real as well as the body, and there is a life of the soul which must be taken into account. For this reason it is that God has sent His messengers into the world, in order that they might reconcile these antagonisms in human life, and breathe into men a higher spirit than that of this present world. Thus is the slumbering germ of a better humanity awakened, and then might we expect the time of which the prophet speaks when men should no longer need to be taught about God, because God Himself would teach them. It is in view of these things that Schleiermacher speaks, because he knows that he has himself been

taught in this way. As he says: "Piety was the mother's womb, in whose sacred darkness my young life was nourished, and was prepared for a world still sealed for it"; and "Religion is of such sort and is so rare, that who ever utters anything of it, must necessarily have had it for nowhere could he have heard it."

Finding himself thus equipped, and impelled to deliver his testimony regarding religion, he thinks it obvious that it is to the German people that he shall speak. They, rather than the English or French have the genius for high and holy things, and will be likely to lend him a willing ear. In this case, at any rate, the prophet shall find honour in his own country. For he will not confine himself to any single branch or conception of religion. He means to penetrate its deepest depths and to show whence and how it comes. Under his guidance we shall discover the inmost secrets of the sanctuary. It will be a long and difficult quest. We shall need to examine all the outward forms of religion in order to arrive at its common content, and to root it in human nature and in what is best there. So doing we shall discover that this kernel is not hollow, but real and fruitful. But we must be sure that we penetrate deep enough:[1] "Why do you not regard the religious life itself, and first those pious exaltations of the mind in which all other known activities are set aside

[1] *Reden*, p. 15.

or almost suppressed, and the whole soul is dissolved in the immediate feeling of the Infinite and Eternal ? In such moments the disposition you pretend to despise reveals itself in primordial and visible form. He only who has studied and known man in these emotions can rediscover religion in those outward manifestations." Or again:[1] "From many such combinations those (religious) systems were gradually compacted. Wherefore you must not rest satisfied with the repeated, oft-broken echo of that original sound. You must transport yourselves into the interior of a pious soul and seek to understand its inspiration. In the very act, you must understand the production of light and heat in a soul surrendered to the Universe. Otherwise you learn nothing of religion, and it goes with you as with one who should too late bring fuel to the fire which the steel has struck from the flint, who finds only a cold, insignificant speck of coarse metal, with which he can kindle nothing any more." Let us, then, he pleads, turn away from all those externals by which religion is usually represented to us, and fix our minds on the inward emotions and dispositions which find utterance in them. These we cannot possibly despise or undervalue. If we do we stand thereby self-condemned.

In the same way Schleiermacher rejects those methods by which religion has often been

[1] *Reden*, p. 17.

defended and justified, such as the device of representing it as a means of maintaining law and order, and a support of morality. To recommend religion on any such terms is at once to misunderstand it and to lay it open to contempt. If it cannot justify itself and stand, as it were, on its own merits, it had better cease to be. Religion is much more than morality and points forward to the ends which morality itself serves. It is on the basis of this wider and deeper conception of religion, assuming that it is natural to man, and that it has a great part to play in human development, that Schleiermacher proceeds to his discussion of the main subject.

The second Speech deals with the nature of religion, and the writer is fully conscious of the greatness of his theme. It is a rare spirit that he has to call forth, and he reminds his readers that "religion in its own original characteristic form, is not accustomed to appear openly, but is only seen in secret by those who love it." With great vigour and vivacity of language he challenges many of the current ideas about religion and first passes them in review, that he may from them reach the right way.

Men distinguish in religion between the theoretical and the practical. It is at one time a way of thinking, a faith, a Weltanschauung; at another it is a way of acting, a desire, and method of conduct. These elements are both necessary to religion, though it transcends them

both. In the earlier edition of the Speeches this antithesis is very sharply stated as one between metaphysics and morals, and the relation of religion to these two is expressed as follows: "Religion neither seeks, like metaphysics, to determine and explain the nature of the Universe, nor like morals to advance and perfect the Universe by the power of freedom and the divine will of man. It is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling. It will regard the Universe as it is. It is reverent attention and submission, in childlike passivity to be stirred and filled by the Universe's immediate influences." But in order to discover this deep and original meaning of religion, in order to discover the sources of its power, we must study its history. We must go back to the sacred writings of all religions and understand how they are related to its native purpose. We cannot, however, expect to find these sources pure. They will contain many conceptions which are like alloys in good metal, and we shall need to separate these, even though they take the form of metaphysical and moral conceptions, in order to arrive at the ultimate religious truth. In other words, we must seek to distinguish between what is the original and characteristic possession of religion, and what has been bestowed upon it from without, or borrowed.

In this quest it will not suffice us to arrive through laws at a Lawgiver, or through mind

at a universal mind. Knowledge of this kind, says Schleiermacher, has nothing to do with religion, and can be attained without it. On the other hand : [1] " The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things, in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal. When this is found religion is satisfied, when it hides itself there is for her unrest and anguish, extremity and death."

Here we reach the beginning of that long argument in the course of which Schleiermacher seeks to establish the immediacy of religious knowledge and its dependence on feeling rather than on ratiocination. He lays great stress on the passive side of piety, on contemplation of and surrender to the Eternal. In this respect religion presents to us a third element alongside of knowledge and the various activities of the moral life. Schleiermacher has in view here Kant's system of morals as developed by Fichte, and in declaring that religion is an indispensable third to science and morality, he is combating the tendency derived from Kant to absorb religion in morality. The acknowledgment of

[1] *Reden*, p. 36.

this third element is necessary to a proper conception of the unity of the individual subject, in whom knowledge and action must be supplemented by feeling. A man acts as one and not in fragments and all the phases of his being go to make up this ultimate unity.[1] "If man is not one with the Eternal, in the unity of intuition and feeling which is immediate, he remains, in the unity of consciousness which is derived, for ever apart." "But in order that you may understand what I mean by this unity and difference of religion, science, and art, we shall endeavour to descend into the inmost sanctuary of life. Then, perhaps, we may find ourselves agreed. There alone you discover the original relation of intuition and feeling from which alone this identity and difference is to be understood. But I must direct you to your own selves. You must apprehend a living movement. You must know how to listen to yourselves before your own consciousness. At least you must be able to reconstruct from your consciousness your own state. What you are to notice is the rise of your consciousness and not to reflect upon something already there." These words give a brief and concise expression of that intellectual mysticism on which Schleiermacher's system is based. They serve to indicate the psychological process which leads him to lay all stress on the immediacy of feeling

[1] *Reden*, pp. 40, 41.

as the ultimate element in the pious consciousness. The power of self-apprehension and distinction is due to the intuition of the Divine as acting upon the self and this is given not derived. Through the finite there is awakened an emotional consciousness of the Infinite, and hence comes an immediate experience of the Eternal and Divine. The process and its results thus indicated, Schleiermacher describes in language almost rhapsodic in its intensity. He concludes:[1] "The chief point in my speech is now uttered. This is the peculiar sphere that I would assign to religion, the whole of it and nothing more. Unless you grant it, you must either prefer the old confusion to clear analysis, or produce something else, I know not what, new and quite wonderful. Your feeling is piety, in so far as it expresses in the manner described the being and life common to you and to the All. Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you. This series is not made up either of perceptions or of objects of perception, either of works or operations or of different spheres of operation, but purely of sensations and the influence of all that lives and moves around, which accompanies them and conditions them. These feelings are exclusively the elements of religion and none are excluded."

[1] *Reden*, p. 45.

Schleiermacher then proceeds to elaborate his distinction between religion and knowledge on the one hand and religion and morality on the other. What we are conscious of in religious emotion is not the nature of things, but their operation upon us. We cannot therefore by means of reflection upon our religious feelings attain an objective science of God. That way mysticism lies, and Schleiermacher, mystic though he was in one sense, will have nothing to do with the mysticism which has been described as "rationalism applied to a sphere above reason." To him [1] "the sum total of religion is to feel that, in its highest unity all that moves us in feeling is one: to feel that aught single and particular is only possible by means of this unity: to feel, that is to say, that our being and living is a being and living in and through God." But it does not necessarily belong to the sphere of religion to make this God an object of perception. We do not know Him apart from His operation on us through the world.

In answer to the question, Is, then, a system of religion possible? Schleiermacher answers both Yes and No. There is an essential oneness underlying all religious manifestations, and so some systematization is possible. Piety is essentially the same, though it may take to itself an endless variety of forms. But this very fact destroys the value of all attempts to impose a

[1] *Reden*, p. 49.

system on religion from without. There can be no limitation or compulsion in religion, its course must be free and self-determined. The love of systematizing religion has led to much corruption, and has destroyed the sense of the infinite which should never be separated from our estimate of religious things.

Schleiermacher carries this principle a stage further in distinguishing between religion and morality:[1] "To a pious mind religion makes everything holy, even unholiness and commonness, whether he comprehends it or does not comprehend it, whether it is embraced in his system of thought or his outside, whether it agrees with his peculiar mode of acting or disagrees. Religion is the natural and sworn foe of all narrow-mindedness and of all onesidedness." When these things are charged on religion they rest on a confusion between religion and theological knowledge. If it be urged that religious men have done immoral things, that does not make their religion responsible for their immorality. It only shows that there is a difference between the two. By itself religion "does not urge men to activity at all." A man's religious feelings should accompany his active life, but they are not necessarily the cause of it. They may modify the motives from which he acts, and the probability therefore is that the more religious a man is the more moral will he

[1] *Reden*, p. 56.

be. The function of religion is to give that order and balance in the life which shall lead to good and harmonious action, and to destroy the tendency to act from single and isolated motives and impulses. Here Schleiermacher is strongly under the influence of the Moravian conception of piety in which he was trained. His reaction against the Kantian position in ethics and the accompanying utilitarian conception of religion, carries him too far.

Granted now this immediacy of religion and its foundation in feeling, when and how is it to be discovered? In the first instance we turn to Nature, which stirs men to religious feeling and is itself a sanctuary. Here the finite reveals the infinite and Nature becomes the "garment we see God by." It is a mistake to base this on the fear that men feel of the powers of Nature. It is not fear that moves them, but rather love of the World-spirit and joy in His operation. But this again cannot be said to be religion, as neither can the wonder and reverence based on the illimitable size and splendour of the natural world. These things appeal to savages and children, and are able to move men in various ways; but the response they call forth is by no means necessarily religion. So, again, the order and irregularities of the world, the contrast between life and death, while they excite deep emotion and call forth praise are not in their consequences religious. It is rather in himself

first that man finds God, and in his own relation to the natural world around him. It is in our own minds first that we discover the sense of the whole and then come to transfer it to Nature around us. Just as man unifies Nature, so he gives to her, as it were, a soul, and finds in her that which corresponds to himself. So again the life of the individual is incomplete without society. It is in others that he finds himself:[1] "Wherefore humanity and religion are closely and indissolubly united. A longing for love, ever satisfied and ever again renewed, forthwith becomes religion. Each man embraces most warmly the person in whom the world mirrors itself for him most clearly and purely: he loves most tenderly the person whom he believes combines all he lacks of complete manhood. Similarly the pious feelings are most holy that express for him existence in the whole of humanity, whether as blessedness in attaining or of need in coming short."

Schleiermacher illustrates this point by the story of the creation of our first parents, and by the place which the home takes in the development of an individual life. He urges that we are not concerned only with individuals but with them in their relation to mankind, with the humanity that is in every man and that is greater than them all. There is an eternal humanity that corresponds to the eternal mind, and

[1] *Reden*, p. 72.

through which alone the life of the individual can be interpreted. Schleiermacher does not put this forth in any sense to the disparagement of the individual. It is meant to create the opposite impression, though he would have succeeded in this better if he had a clearer and stronger view of personality. He has a due sense of the value of the individual, but fails to see any justification for the effort after self-realization. This tends to isolate the ego from his universe, and so in the end to bring the two into conflict. Such a conflict can only result in grievous suffering. It can only be avoided by humility and submission and as self-love is submerged in sympathy. At the same time the ego is conscious that it is itself a compendium of humanity:[1] "In a certain sense your single nature embraces all human nature. Your ego being multiplied, and more clearly outlined, is in all its smallest and swiftest changes immortalized in the manifestations of human nature. As soon as this is seen you can love yourselves with a pure and blameless love. Humility that never forsakes you has its counterpart in the feeling that the whole of humanity lives and works in you."

This involves a view of humanity as becoming rather than as being. The history of this becoming, as that of the deepest and holiest is closely allied to religion. All true history has

[1] *Reden*, p. 79.

at first a religious aim. What is best in it cannot merely be scientifically comprehended, it must be spiritually imparted. In other words it takes a religious mind to discern the things of religion. Soul answers to soul, "and spirit with spirit can meet." There is that in them which can enable them to hold intercourse even over the centuries.

This brings us almost to the limit of our horizon. If we look further than these religious feelings and ideas we look into infinity—a boundless and undiscoverable realm. But there is something there that attracts us; we must keep the horizon open and leave room for a region that is not within the circle of our human limitations.

Hence we cannot allow the common limitation of religion to the sphere of morals. Religion is not a fragment torn off from the whole of human experience. It does not rise exclusively in the moral sphere, nor is it altogether apart from it. Pious minds will see the operation of the World-spirit in all forms of human activity, in feeling as well as in the good will. But these two are separate. In some respects Schleiermacher is as rigorous a moralist as Kant, as when he says: "Morality cannot include immediately aught of feeling without at once having its original power and purity disturbed." In morals there is no reverence save for the law, and no room for any motive that is not purely ethical. Such things as sentiment, pity, or gratitude, and the actions

which they inspire, belong to religion, which is the same of the higher feelings and motives.

At the same time there should be no rivalry between these various objects of endeavour. We ought not to follow one at the expense of the others, though we cannot expect to reach entire uniformity on the plane of human action. This is found only in the Infinite and in its action on men.

Whatever be our special bent we can advance from it to the universe, and in the instinct for the universe as religion we unite these else conflicting powers. Thus religion takes the form of a receptivity, taste, or capacity. It restores the balance of Nature by setting alongside it the endeavour after something definite and complete, an "expansive soaring in the Whole and the Inexhaustible."

From the very difficult and often obscure discussion as to the nature of religion Schleiermacher passes to consider the old question as to the relation between religion in its essence and those dogmas and doctrines in which it finds outward expression. These are not religion, but only products of reflection on religion. They are descriptions of states of consciousness, rather than judgments on what is objectively known. So they are not necessary to piety which is a product of feeling, but they are quite unavoidable when feelings are made the subject of reflection and comparison. They may be said to belong

to the sphere of religion, but not to its essence.

Starting from this basis our author proceeds to declare that religion does not deny the universal validity of scientific and physical conclusions. Hence the futility of the disputes about miracles. Miracles are signs. Every finite thing is a sign of the infinite. So every event becomes a miracle as soon as the religious view of it is dominant. The more religious a man is the more miracle would he see everywhere. To dispute about the miraculous nature of single events argues the poverty of a man's religious sense. It is not the inexplicable and strange alone that is miraculous. "In the interests of religion the necessity can never arise of regarding an event as taken out of its connection with Nature, in consequence of its dependence upon God." So, again, revelation is any new and original communication of the universe to man. It is the source of all intuitions and fresh feeling. As it lies beyond consciousness it cannot be demonstrated, but it can be recognized through its effects. So inspiration is but a general expression for the feeling of true morality and freedom. It springs from the heart of man independently of outward occasions, and as such is felt to be divine. The common expression for revelation and inspiration is the operation of grace.

Now all these ideas, so far as ideas belong to religion at all, are primary and essential. They

show what the religious consciousness must be to a man:[1] "The man who does not see miracles of his own from the standpoint from which he contemplates the world; the man in whose heart no revelation of his own arises, when his soul longs to draw in the beauty of the world and to be permeated by its spirit; the man who does not, in supreme moments, feel, with the most lively assurance, that a divine spirit urges him, and that he speaks and acts from holy inspiration, has no religion." The religion thus described, immediate and intuitive, is true belief. For belief is not, as is generally supposed, the acceptance or reproduction of what others have thought, said, or done. Such belief is a mere echo, and shows that the man who holds it is really incapable of religion. It is an indispensable condition of having any part in religion that it should be your own. Religion does not mean bondage, least of all to the reason. It is true, however, that most men need helpers who shall wake them from their religious slumbers. For a time they may be in tutelage, but only for a time. They must learn in the end to see with their own eyes and stand on their own feet. In this view of it religion is not unworthy of the highest human culture. It belongs to what is deepest and best in us, and to despise it is to belie our true nature and manhood.

But, it will be asked, what about such primary

[1] *Reden*, p. 90.

religious ideas as God and immortality? Schleiermacher admits that for most people these are the very roots of religion, and claims that he has presupposed them in all that he has said; only he does not, and we must not, hold them in the sense in which they are usually understood. In this sense they are no more than ideas, and ideas do not make men religious. Our feelings only become emotions of piety in so far as they are to us revelations of God. Feeling affects and calls forth the divine which is in us, and in us as a whole, not in any part or parts of our being. It is through feeling that the immediate and original existence of God is presented to us. So we cannot see the world as a whole save in God; but while admitting this Schleiermacher is far more interested in the subjective presence of God with us, than in any objective certainty that we can attain about Him. No doubt science may give us a knowledge of God that is the source of all other knowledge, but science is not religion and it is with religion that we are concerned. The familiar idea of God all compounded of attributes and characteristics may exist quite apart from piety and real religion, just as there may be much piety without any coherent or consistent idea of God.

But it must not be assumed that every feeling is an emotion of piety and, as such, has a religious value. This is true only of those feelings that appeal to the immediate and original existence

of God in us. We only see the universe as a whole in God, and the emotions thus produced in us make us conscious of Him.[1] The knowledge we thus obtain may fall short of the demands of science on the one hand, and of piety on the other, but it is none the less real. The vagueness which often characterizes such an idea of God is due to the lack of clearness in a man's relation to the universe. The man who "perceives existence both as one and as all, who stands over against the whole and yet is one with it in feeling," may be counted happy in his religion whatever form of expression for it he may find. It is the manner in which God is present to his feeling, and not the idea of this which he forms, that is decisive of the worth of his religion. The true standard of religiousness is a man's "sense for the Deity." There is no necessity to seek for any outward guarantees for religion beyond this immediate feeling, for all such guarantees tend to lower the conception of religion and make it depend on

[1] In a note dealing with this point Schleiermacher refers to the *Glaubenslehre*, 3–5, and says: "I trust that what is here said, and especially the statement that all pious emotions exhibit through feeling the immediate presence of God in us, may be set in a clearer light. It is hardly necessary to remind you that the existence of God generally can only be active, and as there can be no passive existence of God the divine activity upon any object is the divine existence in respect of that object. It may, however, require to be explained why I represent the unity of our being in contrast to the multiplicity of function as the divine in us."

something less than the highest. On this ground Schleiermacher argues for a conception of the Personality of God less narrow and inadequate than that usually in vogue. What he seems to desiderate is a God who works through consciousness rather than by authority, and whose laws are obeyed through an internal impulse and not from external incentives. He urges that this does not imply any real weakening of the conception of the Divine Personality.

From this he turns to discuss the problem of immortality. He condemns the current ideas on the subject as being inconsistent with true piety. The desire for immortality ought to be something more and greater than a desire for the persistence of personality. Men should be willing to lose their lives in order that they may find them indeed. Real immortality, therefore, will involve the losing of the self in the Universe, or in the One and All. "Only the man who denying himself sinks himself in as much of the whole Universe as he can attain, and in whose soul a greater and holier longing has arisen, has a right to the hopes that death gives." In explaining this position Schleiermacher claims that he does not deny personal immortality, but only seeks a higher ground for the hope than the selfish desire for self-preservation. He thinks that the personal interest in the matter should be purged away by the desire for a wider union, and that this can only be the case with those

" who have already cultivated in themselves the higher life, given by true piety, which is worthy to conquer death." [1] " The parallel between the two ideas of God and immortality, in respect of the different ways of conception here indicated, is not to be overlooked. The most anthropomorphic conception of God usually presupposes a morally corrupt consciousness, and the same holds of such a conception of immortality as pictures the Elysian fields as just a more beautiful and wider earth. As there is a great difference between inability to think of God as in this way personal, and the inability to think of a living God at all, so there is between one who does not hold such a sensuous conception of immortality and one who does not hope for any immortality. As we call every one pious who believes in a living God, so without excluding any kind and manner we would hold the same of those who believe in an eternal life of the spirit." " In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite and in every moment to be eternal is the immortality of religion."

It must be admitted that in regard to both these great matters—the personality of God and the immortality of the soul—Schleiermacher's language is obscure and misleading. No careful reader would imagine that he is merely combating the lack of true piety in the usual views held by his contemporaries. He certainly seems to sub-

[1] *Reden*, p. 118 *n.*

stitute for these ideas which tend towards a denial of both doctrines as generally held by Christians. His disclaimers on the subject must be accepted for what they are worth, and it may be conceded that his second thoughts are sometimes the best. The fact remains, however, that there is much justification for the charges generally brought against him on both these heads. At the same time there is much truth in the following summing up of the position by a recent writer:[1] "The pantheism of the thought of God in all of Schleiermacher's early work is undeniable. He never wholly put it aside. The personality of God seemed to him a limitation. Language is here only symbolical, a mere expression from an environment which we know, flung out into the depths of that we cannot see. If the language of personal relations helps men in living with their truth—well and good. It hinders also. For himself he felt that it hindered more than helped. His definition of religion as the feeling of dependence upon God, is cited as evidence of the effect upon him of his contention against the personalness of God. Religion is also, it is alleged, the sentiment of fellowship with God. Fellowship implies persons. But to no man was the fellowship with the soul of his own soul and of all the universe more real than was that fellowship to Schleiermacher. This was

[1] Prof. E. C. Moore in *The History of Christian Thought since Kant*, p. 78.

the more true in his maturer years, the years of the magnificent sounding out of his thought. God was to him, indeed, not 'a man in the next street.' What he says about the problem of the personalness of God is true. We see, perhaps, more clearly than he did that the debate is largely about words. Similarly we may say that Schleiermacher's passing denial of the immortality of the soul was directed, in the first instance, against the crass, unsocial, and immoral view which has disfigured much of the teaching of religion. His contention was directed toward that losing of oneself in God through ideals and service now, which, in more modern phrase, we call the entrance on the immortal life here, the being in eternity now. For a soul so disposed, for a life thus inspired, death is but an episode."

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (*continued*)

HAVING defined the nature of religion in the terms discussed in the last chapter, Schleiermacher then proceeds to consider the method of its cultivation and propagation. He treats the subject in terms of the circumstances and needs of his own day, but both his statement of the problem and his way of meeting it are singularly pertinent for modern times. There is something contagious about religion, he says, but it needs a free expression and communication. This, however, is not so easy as it ought to be. We live in times of universal upheaval and unrest. The spark of religion, however lovingly and patiently tended, is soon quenched and does not often break out into flame. A man's religion is an inner sanctuary into which few can enter, and the peace of which is not easy to communicate. The secret of it cannot be made known by mere teaching, nor can it be imitated as though it were a work of art. It is the awakening to life of senses that have become deadened, it is the setting light to a fire that, once lighted, will burn independently.

Schleiermacher confesses, therefore, that he does not profess to train men to religion, nor can they so train themselves. The Universe is at once their master and their training-ground. In a note on this point he adds: "In every time when the religious life is stirred, as unquestionably it has begun to be among us since this was written, it seems to me especially necessary that all who, either from profession or from inward call, exercise a marked religious influence, should rise to this freer view, that they may not wonder why so many who have received their first impulse from them, should only find their complete rest in very different views and sentiments. Let every one rejoice at waking life, for he thereby approves himself an instrument of the Divine Spirit, but let none believe that the fashioning of it continues in his own power." Man is born with a religious capacity which needs to be developed. The hindrance to its development does not come from scoffers and doubters or from any external source. It is from within and must be there met and suppressed. The first stirrings of religion are seen in the longing of the young for the marvellous and in those secret presentiments which urge them to look beyond the things of this world. It is a great delusion to try and confine them to the finite and sensuous. In any education of them this must be avoided, and they must be encouraged to give the rein to their proper nature. However crude their

early ideas on the subject may be, it is better to leave them to develop than to try and arbitrarily correct and guide them. Generally, however, these budding religious emotions are suppressed: imagination is cramped; and the growing soul is trained in narrow ways of morality and propriety. This is not the method of sympathy and understanding, nor will it bring them to the desired goal. Men must not be confined too closely to the merely visible side of things, nor must their aspirations after the unseen be too rudely checked. There are good people who in the name of intelligence and common sense "dock everything with their shears, and will not suffer a single characteristic phenomenon that might awake a religious interest to grow. What can be seen and understood from their standpoint is all they will allow, and it is merely a small barren circle, without science, without morals, without art, without love, without spirit, I might almost say without letter. In short, it is without anything whereby the world might disclose itself, and yet it has many lofty pretensions to the same."

The chief danger to religion, Schleiermacher urges, is to be found in the utilitarian and eudæmonist spirit which permeates the whole of life. This appeals to the worldly interests and has a semblance of philanthropy about it which makes it appear to many as a fit substitute

for religion. It must be opposed root and branch. But the opposition can only come from the inner life; from the cultivation of that mystical side of human nature which is the true home of piety. This will not mean mere emotionalism, but something far more real and effective.[1] "There is a great and powerful mysticism, not to be considered by the most frivolous man without reverence and devotion, which, by its heroic simplicity and proud scorn of the world, wrings admiration from the most judicious." But it needs a daring faith, and a determination to open the soul to nature, if this is to have its perfect work. Such an attitude puts men out of harmony with the present world and demands both courage and experience. To secure it, it will be necessary to conserve and unite all the best elements in the religion of our time, to give direction to the sporadic efforts of men after holiness and the higher life, and to put some conscience into their religious strivings. This new piety must be broader and more charitable than that often in vogue, and must attract rather than drive men into its ranks. It will require a cultivation of the keenness and vigour of the religious sense, and will not suffer it to be dissipated in manifold external activities. What this means Schleiermacher indicates in the following crucial passage:[2] "Every man knows from his own consciousness three spheres of the sense in which its different

[1] *Reden*, p. 133. [2] Ibid., p. 137.

manifestations are divided. First, there is the interior of the Ego itself; second, the outer world, in so far as it is indefinite and incomplete—call it mass, matter, element, or what you will; the third seems to unite both, the sense turning in constant change, within and without, and only finding peace in perceiving the absolute unity of both sides, which is the sphere of the individual, of what is complete in itself, of all that is art in nature and in the works of man. Every one is not equally at home in all those spheres, but from each there is a way to pious exaltations of the soul which take characteristic form simply according to the variety of the ways in which they have been found." Schleiermacher believes that by self-study and self-limitation men may be able to overcome the bounds of their temporal being and attain to the sense of the eternal. Here, he thinks, modern idealism and ancient oriental mysticism join hands and lead to the same results. It is not by any artistic process, but by the practise of self-forgetfulness that true religion is attained. Lack of simplicity is always a hindrance to the religious sense, and neither science nor philosophy can take the place of that inner contemplation and reflection by which alone the secret doors of the Universe are opened.

He is conscious, however, that religion cannot wholly belong to, nor is it perfected in, the life of the individual. And so he passes to the subject

of his fourth Speech, which he calls "Association in Religion," or "Church and Priesthood." "If there is religion at all, it must be social, for that is the nature of man, and it is quite peculiarly the nature of religion." The more deeply a man feels the more eager will he be to impart what he feels, not merely with a view to making proselytes, but in order to realize his oneness with others and to set forth the true relation of his own life to the common nature of man. But in the very act of communicating his own spiritual states and feelings he is urged to test and examine them, and he will only make known that of which he has some guarantee in himself. But it is his consciousness of the fact that his religious feeling is imperfect so long as it is confined to himself alone that leads him to seek others to share it. They are necessary to its full development.

This communication of religion is something more than the impartation of book learning, or than conversation on religious themes. The Scriptures, for example, represent only the letter of religion, and the letter is dead in comparison with the activity of religion in the living society. If it is to be imparted at all it must be through the highest and noblest kind of human speech, and in a society capable of receiving it in the same spirit:[1] "Would that I could depict to you the rich, the superabundant life in this city

[1] *Reden*, p. 151.

of God, when the citizens assemble, each full of native force seeking liberty of utterance, and full at the same time of holy desire to apprehend and appropriate what others offer. When one stands out before the others he is neither justified by office nor by compact: nor is it pride or ignorance that inspires him with assurance. It is the free impulse of his spirit, the feeling of heartfelt unanimity and completest equality, the common abolition of all first and last, of all earthly order. He comes forward to present to the sympathetic contemplation of others his own heart as stirred by God, and, by leading them into the region of religion where he is at home, he would infect them with his own feeling." In this fine description of worship in the Church Schleiermacher is drawing on his own experience among the Moravians, in whose worship the primitive model was closely observed, but he wishes it to be understood that he does not advocate a free and unordered type of religious service, so much as one in which the spirit shall move men on accustomed and familiar lines. The sympathy which this common worship thus produces is like a music of the soul in which things are uttered without definite speech and ideas conveyed without words. The unison thus manifested is of the highest possible kind. It is a heavenly bond, the best product of man's spiritual nature, and altogether different from those civic and political societies of which

men make so much. Therefore within this society the common distinction between priesthood and laity does not exist, or rather it becomes a distinction of office and function, but not of persons.[1] "This society is a priestly nation, a complete republic, where each in turn is leader and people, following in others the same power that he feels in himself and uses for governing others." In the Christian society all true members are equal and priesthood is a thing of function not of privilege. The ideal is that all alike shall be taught of God.

To Schleiermacher this fundamental Christian unity, based as it is on the sympathy of pious souls, is at once superior to and compatible with diversity. Within the society there will always be differences and resemblances that tend to the forming of groups, but these need not involve any rigid separation. Each such group may remain an integral part of the whole, and it is a delusion to imagine that to any of them can belong the awful watchword, "No salvation save with us." When the separating impulse leads to such a hard and fast cleavage it is a proof of grave imperfection in the society.

Such being the nature of the religious society it is evident that the work of propagating its beliefs and ideals must be that of individuals, rather than that of the society itself. It cannot communicate the religion by which it lives to

[1] *Reden*, p. 153.

those to whom religion is altogether strange, save in the most general and indefinite forms. But such communication, if it is to be of any service, must be definite and particular and, in order to make it, the individual must come from the circle where his own religious life has been nourished and give himself to those outside, as a missionary to the heathen.[1] "He presents himself among them as a priestly figure, expressing clearly and vividly his higher sense in all his doings and in his own nature. And if there be any response, how willingly he nurses those first presentiments of religion in a new soul, believing it to be a beautiful pledge of its growth even under an alien and inclement sky, and how triumphantly he conducts the novice to the exalted assembly! This activity for the extension of religion is only the pious longing of the stranger for his home, the endeavour to carry his Fatherland with him, and find again everywhere its laws and customs which are his higher, more beauteous life."

Schleiermacher admits that the picture here drawn of the Church and its activities is nearer to the ideal than to the reality. He is speaking of the Church triumphant rather than of the Church militant, and he insists that such a Church exists and is not merely a dream. Whenever there is real religious consciousness and real piety these conditions are maintained. The

[1] *Reden*, p. 156.

union among the men who constitute such a society is real and finds expression for itself as indicated above. The difficulty about the Church as we know it, and the reason why it often fails to rise to the height of our ideal, is that it is not so much a society of religious men, as a society of those who are seeking for religion. In such a society religious communication cannot be mutual, but there will be the few who can give and the many who can only receive. Merely to seek after religion and to feel the dim monitions of the religious sense is hardly religion at all. But it is a condition in which men are impelled to strive for something better, and are laid open to the influence of those in whom religion is real. For it must be remembered that there is an aptitude for religion in all men, and this justifies the otherwise apparently fruitless efforts of the Church. But it means also that the Church becomes less useful to men the further they advance in the religious life.

Of Christians in the Church as we know it, and as distinguished from the ideal Church which he has in mind, Schleiermacher says:[1] "The conclusion is, that their united action has nothing of the character of the higher and freer inspiration that is proper to religion, but has a schoolmastering, mechanical nature, which indicates that they merely seek to import religion from without. This they attempt by every means.

[1] *Reden*, p. 161.

To that end they are so attached to dead notions, to the results of reflection about religion, and drink them in greedily, that the process that gave them both may be reversed, and that the ideas may change again to the living emotions and feelings from which they were originally deduced. Thus they employ creeds which are naturally last in religious communication, to stimulate what should properly precede them." At the same time there must be room in the Church for those who are only learners and beginners in religion.

As the Church is to-day the spirit of sectarianism, the distinction between a priesthood and the laity, and a purely intellectual presentation of religion seem to be inevitable evils. But these do not necessarily belong to religion, nor are they inevitable in the true and ideal Church. But those who constitute such a Church must be saints, men who have made trial of religion for themselves, who are able to teach others because they themselves know and have the authority which comes of a living experience.

A further evil in the Church as we know it, and one that is due to the mixture within the Church of believing persons and those desiring belief, is the acceptance of princely patronage and civil privileges. This " works on the religious society like the terrible head of Medusa," and turns everything about it to stone. It gives to the Church an interest in worldly things, which is

not compatible with pure and undefiled religion, and it attracts into the Church men who are covetous of only earthly rewards. Thus relation with the State loosens the bond between the true Church and the visible religious society. The Church may, however, voluntarily help the State by instructing people in religion, and the State will not lose its interest in religion even though it be separate from the Church. The State must leave the religious societies free to follow their own course, only seeing to it that they do no harm to the civil community. On the question of Education, Schleiermacher thinks that the Church has nothing to do with that which is purely scientific and academic, and adds the following very timely and pertinent remarks:[1] "Perhaps the Church has earlier thought of education than the State. The State will then say, 'I see that you have the institutions for educating the youth, but they do not suffice me. I will add what fails, but will then take them under my guidance.' If the Church dares to speak, and understands its own good, it will reply, 'Not so, but for all deficiency make your own institutions, and we, as citizens, will honourably contribute our utmost to their success.' Does the State, nevertheless, do by force the contrary, there will be an element in the highest degree undesirable to the Church, and it will feel it an injury even when this gives the doubtful

[1] *Reden*, p. 199 *n.*

privilege of a certain influence on many things whereon by the natural course of things it would have none."

Further, this connection between Church and State will mean that the State treats the Church as an institution of its own appointment. The result of this will be that men of an ambitious and intriguing spirit will press into the Church for ends of their own, and mar the purity of its fellowship. It will mean also that the State will use the most sacred mysteries of the Church for its own purposes; the Sacraments will become legal and civil rites. "It is very apparent that a society to which such a thing can happen, which with false humility accepts favours that can profit it nothing and with cringing readiness takes on burdens that send it headlong to destruction; which allows itself to be abused by an alien power, and parts with the liberty and independence which are its birthright for a delusion: which abandons its own high and noble aim to follow things that lie quite outside of its path, cannot be a society of men who have a definite aim and know exactly what they wish."

Schleiermacher argues thus not only for the freedom of the Church from all State connection, but also for its deliverance from credal bondage, and for a minimizing of the distinction between the clergy and laity. The true Church must be mobile and elastic even in its doctrinal position,

and must allow scope for the prophet as well as for the priest. How this is to be brought about he is not altogether sure, but he feels it his duty to protest against the existing condition of things in the Church as he knows it, and in doing so he lays down the principles of ecclesiastical freedom in a most cogent and unmistakable way. His general conclusion on the matter is found in a note to the Speeches as follows: [1] "The feeling that ecclesiastical matters, as they then existed in the greater part of Germany, and still exist, little altered, could not continue as they were, has since become much more general and definite. Yet how the matter will turn is still not much clearer. This alone can be foreseen, that if an Evangelical Church is not soon put in a position in which a fresher public spirit can be developed in it, and if the restrictive treatment of our Universities and our open spiritual intercourse is longer continued, the hopes we cherish will be fruitless blossom, and the fair dawn of the recent time has only betokened storm. Living piety and liberal courage will ever more and more disappear from the clerical order. Dominion of the dead letter from above and uneasy, spiritless sectarianism from below will approach. From their collision a whirlwind will arise that will drive many helpless souls into the outstretched net of Jesuitism, and deaden and weary the great masses to utter indifferentism.

[1] Oman's ed., p. 207.

The signs that proclaim this are clear enough : but every one should on every occasion declare that he sees them as a testimony against those who heed them not." These are prophetic words, and the whole history of the Protestant Church in Europe since Schleiermacher wrote is a commentary upon them. The freedom of the Church from all external bondage, and the strict preservation of its spiritual character and prophetic mission were never so necessary as they are today, and must be regarded as the condition of all future progress in organized religion. Moreover, only on these terms can there be a real unity in the Church, in and above its diversities. Schleiermacher sees clearly that uniformity is not unity. The true Church is a fellowship, and fellowship is a fellowship of differences. But underlying them all is that oneness of aim and spirit which will always characterize those who are truly Christian in their outlook.

From the question of the Church and the Christian Schleiermacher turns in his fifth Speech to the question of religion and the religions. Plurality of religions, he argues, is a different matter from plurality of Churches. Religion can only be completely manifested in multiplicity, for it will always take to itself a definite shape, which will vary with the character of the individual or society which embodies it. We cannot, then, be satisfied with a mere general idea of religion. It must show itself in specific

forms, and these will change with the endlessly changing development of the human race.

It is these different manifestations of religion in history that have been known to men of culture as the positive religions, which, however, they regard as much inferior to the so-called natural religion. But it is a mistake to think that there is any special superiority about this latter name, or about the thing it represents. Very often natural religion is conceived in so purely moral and metaphysical a fashion, as that there is very little real religion left about it. But if we admit that religion is native to man and is among the highest of his capacities, we shall be prepared to think the better of it, the more characteristic and distinctive is the form that it assumes. It is, of course, quite true that the positive religions as we know them do not always exhibit religion at its best. There are alien and corrupt elements in all of them. But these corruptions are not due to the religion itself, but to various temporal and material features which have been introduced into it. Even when the religion has altogether degenerated and become a series of empty customs, or a system of abstract ideas and theories, we can yet penetrate below this dead exterior to the inner and original life of it, and find there something which is of the nature of religion indeed. In order to be able thus to separate the true from the false in religion we must turn aside from the

characteristics of individual religions and seek to discover [1] the essence of all positive religion. It is only in positive religion that a "true individual cultivation of the religious capacity is possible." For "the whole of religion is nothing but the sum of all the relations of man to God, apprehended in all the possible ways in which any man can be immediately conscious in his life."

In order to verify the position thus laid down Schleiermacher proceeds to examine existing historical religions and their relations. These religions cannot be classified or distinguished according to the quantity of religious matter which they contain. Nor can the single definite religion which we seek be classified under such forms as naturalism, pantheism, polytheism or deism. These are but types, and each of them

[1] Contrast with this the treatment of the subject in Bousset's *What is Religion?*, p. 11. "It must be clearly noted that religion is a fundamental element in the mental life of mankind, of a primary and not a derivative character. At any rate, the attempts hitherto made to reduce religion to a simple elementary function have failed. Attempts have been made to derive religion from the *Kausalitätsdrang*, the instinct for knowledge; to consider it 'the instinctive thought,' the elementary stage of true philosophic thought: to degrade it to an æsthetic illusion or to accept its propositions as postulates for the basis of ethics. Opposed to this is the view that in religion we are dealing with a powerful primary manifestation of human personality, derived from nothing, not to be reduced to one of the categories belonging to man's mental life, such as thinking, feeling, willing, but a phenomenon standing by itself."

is capable of manifesting many different religious individualities. So [1] "the only remaining way for a truly individual religion to arise is to select some one of the great relations of mankind in the world to the Highest Being, and in a definite way, make it the centre and refer to it all the others. In respect of the idea of religion, this may appear a purely arbitrary proceeding, but, in respect of the peculiarity of the adherents, being the natural expression of their character, it is the purest necessity." Some such definite form is required for the proper development and expression of religion in the individual, though this does not mean that every individual must necessarily belong to one of the existing forms of religion. Schleiermacher is of opinion that no individual need be hindered from developing a religion suited to his own nature and his own religious sense. Every founder of a religion has done this, and when his action has been justified he has never failed to attract followers. The fact that others agree with him is a guarantee of the naturalness and truth of his religious position, and cannot injure individuality. No religion has ever exhausted the possibilities of religion, there is always a large unoccupied region left for others to enter. The men who follow the lead of others in religion are not to be characterized as mere imitators, they are working out the need of their own individuality in their own way.

[1] *Reden*, p. 223.

An example of this may be found in Christianity, where there are endless varieties of opinion each exhibiting its characteristic development. There the religious life has its past, present and future, and works itself out in different individual forms. But there is at the same time a unity of consciousness of relation to the Highest in which the individual religious life originates.[1] "Every intelligent finite being announces its spiritual nature and individuality by taking you back to what I may call a previous marriage in him of the Infinite with the finite, and your imagination refuses to explain it from any single prior factor, whether caprice or nature. In the same way, you must regard as an individual every one who can point to the birthday of his spiritual life and relate a wondrous tale of the rise of his religion as an immediate operation of the Deity, as an influence of His spirit. He must be characteristic and special, for such an event does not happen to produce in the kingdom of religion vain repetition."

We must not, therefore, entertain any of the common prejudice against positive religion. It should be approached with sympathy, which is half way to understanding. The mere contemplation of the way in which God works in the souls of men should be enough to determine us in its favour. There is a religious receptivity in men of which we ought to take account, and

[1] *Reden*, p. 228.

the variety of its development is a proper and most interesting object for investigation. The results of positive religion, the character which it produces, the heroism to which it often leads, are not the unaided products of human capacity, they are a divine work. But if we turn to natural religion, as generally understood, we do not find the same results accruing. Such religion seems to have no character of its own and to be without life. It is dependent on morals or intellect, and its only uniformity is that of indefiniteness. Those who favour natural religion over against positive or characteristic religion, tend to make a virtue of moderation and suspect anything in the nature of enthusiasm. But these things are necessary to any real religion. Even "belief in a personal God, more or less anthropomorphic, and in a personal immortality, more or less dematerialized and sublimated," does not depend on knowledge alone. Faith is necessary to it, and in faith, emotion is an element. The natural religion so called, which excludes this, is but an inarticulate echo of the general piety.

Definite religion, on the other hand, must begin with an original fact, and must have some common ground. In it everything is active, strong, and secure: however various the forms in which it is expressed, it admits of a fellowship and a union that are more than merely imaginative. It is true, however, that no religion has yet reached actuality, or has fully and finally

expressed the fundamental relation between the human and the divine. We must distinguish between the essence of a religion and its representation. This latter is always in historical form which is at once its glory, and the cause of much misunderstanding. The historical expression is often confused with the fundamental intention of the religion, but they ought always to be distinguished:[1] "Above all I beg you not to be misled by the two hostile principles that everywhere, and almost from the earliest times, have sought to distort and obscure the spirit of religion. Some would circumscribe it to a single dogma, and exclude everything not fashioned in agreement with it, others from hatred to polemics, or to make religion more agreeable to the irreligious, or from misunderstanding and ignorance of the matter, or from lack of religious sense, decry everything characteristic as dead letter. Guard yourselves from both. With rigid systematizers or shallow indifferentists you will not find the spirit of a religion. It is found only among those who live in it as their element, and ever advance in it without cherishing the folly that they embrace it all."

The fact is that religion is only really comprehensible through itself. The lack of the right point of view would not matter so much if our concern were only the proper understanding and classification of ancient religions, but we have to study

[1] *Reden*, p. 237.

the religions which are still alive and influential. For example we are interested in Judaism not merely because it is the forerunner of Christianity, for every religion has its own eternal necessity in itself and is to that extent original, but because of its beautiful childlike character. This has been overlaid by vast moral and political corruptions, but in essence and on the strictly religious side it gives us a unique form of the relation between the finite and the infinite. This culminates in the belief in a Messiah, at once the noblest fruit and final effort of Judaism. It remains until this day, but it is as a solitary fruit on a withered tree. Christianity is the outcome of a nobler instinct and has a wider range. Schleiermacher describes it as " just the intuition of the universal resistance of finite things to the unity of the whole, and of the way the Deity treats this resistance." In other words, Christianity is a religion of reconciliation,[1] and of the redemption of man

[1] Cf. Bousset, *What is Religion?* p. 233. " Thus in the very centre of the Christian religion stands the thought of redemption, the belief that when man aspires to God the old passes away and a new life is born. In the religion of the law this thought had only been vital as a hope of the actual political deliverance of the people. In this respect Christianity stands side by side with the religions of redemption. Yet its belief in redemption is peculiar. It is not here a matter of ' Get rid of life,' nor of ' Get rid of the material experience of the senses ' : it is ' Get free from sin.' God in His fatherly goodness forgives sins. Christianity as a moral religion of redemption stands at the head of all religions."

from that which separates him from God. All God's dealings with men are calculated on this basis. They have as their object the getting rid of the corruption which keeps man and God apart, and the restoration of a new order. Man cannot accomplish this for himself. When he seeks union with the Infinite, the finite stands in his way. Only by the power of God can he overcome this resistance. Christianity presupposes this evil and impotence of man, and this is the secret of its strength. "Into the inmost secrets of the corrupt heart it presses, and illumines with the sacred torch of personal experience every evil that creeps in darkness." It attacks the old heathen separation between man and God, and makes man's good consist in living, moving and having his being in the Divine. Thus it aims at holiness, and embarks on a career of perpetual struggle against all tendencies and traces of irreligion. The word of its founder, "I am not come to bring peace but a sword," foretold the necessary result of the purity and loftiness of His teaching.[1] "In nature you often see a compound mass, as soon as its chemical powers have overcome outside resistance or reduced it to equilibrium, take to fermenting, and eject one and another element. So it is with Christianity, it turns at last its polemical power against itself. Ever anxious, lest in its struggle with external irreligion, it has admitted some-

[1] *Reden*, p. 244.

thing alien, or may yet have in itself some principle of corruption, it does not avoid even the fiercest inward commotions to eject the evil." Thus Christianity is always progressive, stirred by an insatiable longing after ever greater perfection and purity. Its highest aim is a piety that comes only of a complete union with the life of the divine. So we are justified in saying that it rests on feeling—a feeling of unsatisfied longing, a holy sadness—a Sehnsucht—which is the song always heard in the inmost Sanctuary of the soul. This inner nature of Christianity cannot be altered by its distortions and corruptions. These are inevitable in any human handling of divine things, and the power of the Christian religion remains in spite of them. How Schleiermacher conceives of this power as manifested in the person of its Founder we may see from the following passage:[1] "When, in the mutilated delineations of His life I contemplate the sacred image of Him who has been the author of the noblest that there has yet been in religion, it is not the purity of his moral teaching, which but expressed what all men who have come to consciousness of their spiritual nature, have with Him in common, and which, neither from its expression, nor from its beginning can have greater value, that I admire; and it is not the individuality of His character, the close union of high power with teaching gentleness,

[1] *Reden*, p. 246.

for every noble simple spirit must in a special situation, display some traces of a great character. All those things are merely human. But the truly divine element is the glorious clearness to which the great idea He came to exhibit attained in His soul. This idea was, that all that is finite requires a higher mediation to be in accord with the Deity, and that for man under the power of the finite and particular, and too ready to imagine the divine itself in this form, salvation is only to be found in redemption. Vain folly it is to wish to remove the veil that hides the rise of this idea in Him, for every beginning in religion, as elsewhere, is mysterious. The prying sacrilege that has attempted it can only distort the divine. He is supposed to have taken His departure from the ancient idea of His people, and He only wished to utter its abolition which by declaring Himself to be the Person they expected He did most gloriously accomplish. Let us consider the living sympathy for the spiritual world that filled His soul, simply as we find it complete in Him."

In spite of this lofty characterization of Jesus Christ Schleiermacher is not prepared to admit that He is the only mediator between God and man. There are other ways of approach which men have found possible in the past and may still be available for some. Even Christianity is subject to corruption and does not always seem to fulfil its promise. The point to be sure of,

however, is that there is something divine in our humanity. This will make itself felt in many ways and wherever it really shows itself it is good. We need not be dismayed that it is not always and everywhere the same. For "as nothing is more irreligious than to demand general uniformity in mankind, so nothing is more unchristian than to seek uniformity in religion."

In the Epilogue to his Speeches, Schleiermacher warns his readers that they must not be disappointed if they do not see his predictions coming true, if they do not discover Christianity taking to itself new forms in proof of its power as a religion. These things can only come about slowly, just because they are so great. What he would have men remember is that this Christianity which they despise is a religious type in which they themselves are all unconsciously rooted, and with which is bound up all that they count most precious in life. His purpose has been to establish the power of this Christianity, and to show how it will rise triumphant over all oppositions and internal strifes. Schleiermacher then proceeds to illustrate the point from the antithesis in Christianity marked by the names Catholic and Protestant. He believes that this opposition is one of the means by which Christianity lives and that in his day it has reached a climax or turning-point,

though it has by no means diminished or disappeared. He suggests also that this is not likely to be the case so long as the German nation survives. But there is a tendency for men to pass over from the Protestant to the Catholic position. As long as this is due to a genuine belief that Catholicism is the more religious and that Protestantism is a harder and less lively form of faith, it may be commended. But when it is due to the weakness of men, and to the sickness of their souls, to a desire for more external support, and for an authority which takes away from them all responsibility, it becomes a kind of superstition or idolatry which will accomplish nothing for men. If it be thought that the Romish Church is gradually losing its corruptions, and that the opposition between it and the Protestant may gradually cease, there is no warrant for such an idea. Germany was appointed to maintain the Protestant position and will always be equal to the task. "Here you have a sign if you require it, and when this miracle comes to pass you will perhaps believe in the living power of religion and of Christianity. But blessed are they by whom it comes to pass, who do not see and yet believe."

On this curious and somewhat restricted note the Speeches on Religion end. The conclusion is very characteristic of Schleiermacher who, in all

matters relating to Christianity and the Christian Church, is very much at the mercy of the Zeitgeist. His book is a polemic, and was directed against certain evils and abuses characteristic of the time at which it was written. Twenty years later Schleiermacher admitted that, if he had to write it again, he would address himself to a very different audience. During his life-time a great change came over the spirit of religion in Germany and for this change, which was altogether for the better, he was himself largely responsible. The following judgment of Neander quoted by Oman well sums up the general influence of this work:[1] "The book was the occasion of a great revolution and mighty stirring of spirits. Men of the older generation, adherents of the ancient Christian supernaturalism or earnest Rationalists whose living faith in a God above the world and a life beyond was a relic of it, rejected the pantheistic elements in the book with anger and detestation. But those who were then among the rising generation, know with what might this book, that testified in youthful enthusiasm of the neglected religious elements in human nature, wrought upon the heart. In opposition to our one-sided intellectualism it was of the greatest importance that the might of religious feeling, the seat of religion in the heart should be pointed out. It was a weighty impulse to science that men were directed from the

[1] *Reden*, p. lvi.

arbitrary abstract aggregate called the Religion of Reason to the historical significances, in the flesh and blood of life, of religion, and of Christianity as part of religion. This accorded with the newly awakened interest and sense for historical research."

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

SCHLEIERMACHER'S Theology was profoundly affected by his method and his aims. It is throughout Christian, built up upon, or evolved from the Christian self-consciousness. It is this fact which gives to it its order and range.[1] He does not regard it as his business to start from the universal principles of reason, but from the right understanding of the Christian Church, and of its relations to the thought and life of the Christian community. A Church is to be distinguished from all other human associations, by the fact that it is based on religion or piety (Frömmigkeit). The basis of this is an immediate self-consciousness in which man is neither in the first instance active or reflective, but receptive or dependent, and that in an absolute manner. This condition, the highest of which man is capable, determines his relation to the

[1] Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, 11. "Das Christentum ist eine der teleologischen Richtungen der Frömmigkeit angehörige monotheistische Glaubensweise, und unterscheidet sich von andern solchen wesentlich dadurch, das alles in derselben bezogen wird auf die durch Jesum von Nazareth vollbrachte Erlösung."

Universe on the one hand, and to God, on the other. The Christian Church in particular is marked by two special modifications of this general religious principle. In the first place Christianity is a monotheistic and teleological (or ethical) religion. In the second place it is a religion of redemption, and this redemption is traced back to the historical figure of Jesus Christ. Thus the principles with which we have become familiar in Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion are made regulative of his dogmatic system. He carries them out, however, not always simply and straightforwardly, as though he had merely to develop certain given ideas, but in antithesis to other systems and methods. These though he does not often definitely seek to combat them, remain a kind of background to his thought and deeply influence the course of his reasoning. It has been said of Schleiermacher that he was above all things a Vermittler. The characterization is true in so far as it means that he is always conscious of antitheses and always aiming at harmonies. This belongs as much to his temperament as to his method, and was not without influence on the general course of his thought. Thus in regard to the discipline of dogmatic theology, he was repelled by the disorderly and haphazard methods of many of his predecessors, and was distinctly original in the effort he made to given an ordered and systematic presentation of theological science.

But it may be questioned whether the main principle on which he bases his system is sufficiently strong to bear it, whether he is always justified in his attempts to articulate the various branches of the system into the main stem. Admirable, and indeed epoch making, as is his insistence on the fundamental nature of experience and feeling in religion, it is not always easy to justify the influence which he assigns to the self-consciousness in framing and expressing religious truths. Nor does he always clearly relate the consciousness of the individual to that of the Church or that of the Church to the general development of theological thought and enquiry. Further criticism of the method which Schleiermacher pursues will become obvious as we proceed, but need not in any way detract from his merit as one who sought in a bold and original way to systematize theology.

At present we are concerned only with his doctrine of God, and the point of interest is to note that while, in a sense, he makes it fundamental to his system as it surely should be, he also makes it derivative. Again his attitude is Christian. Instead of seeking to reach the idea and character of God on the basis of the position suggested in the *Reden*, from the *consensus gentium* on the one hand and the fitness of religion to the mind of man on the other, he starts again with the definitely Christian consciousness. On the other hand, however, he is

not unaware of or indifferent to the fact, that the Christian consciousness itself needs to be related to the world-consciousness of God and of human need for its full justification. While, for instance, we may heartily accept the proposition that we only know God in Christ, we understand that it refers to a full and complete knowledge, and that it does not by any means exclude other channels whereby the truth reaches us though in lesser volume and with diminished brightness. The bearing of this on Schleiermacher's position will become clearer as we proceed.

For the dogmatic expression of his theology Schleiermacher insists on a certain limitation of the God-consciousness. There must be reference to the New Testament, which is always the norm of Christian teaching rather than the Bible as a whole; and there must be reference also to the need for redemption which tends to make this consciousness specifically Christian. This latter limitation is especially important in its effect upon the doctrine of God,[1] which must be viewed always in relation to the need for redemption, which, as well as the feeling of dependence, is part of the all-regulative Christian consciousness. It is from this point, then, that Schleiermacher's doctrine of God begins. At the outset he quite clearly indicates that we know God only as related to ourselves and to the universe. Of God in Himself we do not possess any objective

[1] Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, §§ 30, 31.

knowledge. This is no more than to say, "No man hath seen God at any time;" and even if such immediate knowledge of God were possible it would not be relevant as not springing directly from the religious feeling. The older dogmatic theologians made a great mistake in dealing with various poetical and imaginative statements about God as though they provided absolute knowledge in regard to Him. This has proved one of the great causes of scepticism, because it is impossible to regard such a treatment of the subject as in any way scientific. It does not give us objective facts. If we proceed along the ordinary lines of speculation, and describe God as made up of a number of mutually independent attributes, we destroy both the unity of God Himself and the unity of the religious life of man. For the tendency of men is to relate themselves to God through those attributes which especially appeal to them, and so He will become, as it were, a different God to different men. So we must abandon the customary effort after a rational theology and seek to find the foundation of our doctrine of God simply in the feeling of absolute dependence. The first and most legitimate inference from this is the idea of an absolute causality. This is the direct reflection of our own self-consciousness as dependent beings. This feeling, however, is subject to various modifications which justify us in inferring other attributes which may equally

necessarily be said to belong to the idea of God as we conceive it through the medium of our dependence.[1]

This position shows distinct traces of the influence of Spinoza. Spinoza argues that men do not realize the consequences of their belief in God as cause. While it belongs to the very nature of the human mind to know God, it seems to be almost beyond our human powers to relate him to the universe in any intelligible way:[2] "Thus while men are contemplating finite things, they think of nothing less than of the divine nature; and again, when they turn to consider the divine nature, they think of nothing less than of their former fictions on which they have built up the knowledge of finite things, as if these

[1] Cf. Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, p. 33. "Wenn Schleiermacher die Religion als schlechthiniges Abhängigkeitsgefühl definiert, so ist das eine Formel, die gewiss das Grundwesen der christlichen Religion nicht erschöpft, zumal in dem Sinne nicht, wie Schleiermacher meint, dass sie es tue. Aber wahr ist es eben doch, dass wir Christen uns von unserem Gotte schlechthin abhängig wissen. Die Formel ist für das Christentum zu vag, um die Grundformel zu sein. Aber sie berührt den Herzpunkt des Christentums. Sie kann alles im christlichen Gemüte in Bewegung setzen: sie erzeugt Schwingungen darin, die immer als 'reine Töne' gelten werden. Wenn Schleiermacher von einer Erlösung spricht, so bleibt diese Formel für den Christen im Rechte gerade auch wenn man gar nicht weiter zusieht, wie Schleiermacher sich die Entzweiung, die Sünde, den Heiland spezieller denkt."

[2] *Ethics*, pt. ii, p. 10.

things could contribute nothing to our understanding of the divine nature. Hence it is not wonderful that they are always contradicting themselves." While Schleiermacher would, no doubt, agree with this, his statement of the relation between the self-consciousness on the one hand, and the God-consciousness on the other, forms a considerable advance upon such a position. Our own consciousness of relations is strictly within the world whole, and so our consciousness of the divine causation is of that which only finds its expression within the totality of Nature. Nature is, in other words, "the garment we see God by," but there is no necessity for the identification of the two. Our relation to the world is at once one of relative freedom and of relative dependence, but seeing that both we and the world are absolutely dependent on God, we have suggested in Him a causality which is both infinite and eternal. The whole of Schleiermacher's discussion of the cognizability of God depends on his distinction between feeling and apprehension as organs of knowledge. To him God as transcendent is beyond knowledge, though the *fact* of his transcendence seems to be regarded as a legitimate inference from our consciousness of dependence. Even in dealing with the divine attributes Schleiermacher goes so far as to say:[1] "All attributes which we ascribe to God denote nothing separate in God, but only something

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, i, 50.

separate in the manner in which we refer our feeling of dependence to Him." It is in these words that Philippi said there "was latent the very abyss of pantheism." But the judgment was at least a hasty one in view of the position indicated in regard to God as transcendent. Schleiermacher makes his position somewhat clearer in the *Dialektik*, the argument in which is summed up by Dorner as follows:[1] "The mental representation of God which is immediately connected with the sentiment of absolute dependence, comprehends the fact that God is the ultimate unity of all opposites, but He Himself is opposed to nothing, because to suppose that He is would be to limit and make Him finite. But still, all our knowledge presupposes one opposite, especially if the object of knowledge embraces everything—the opposition at any rate between the object thought and the thinking subject. If God, therefore, became matter of knowledge, that could only be by His being contrasted with something, and so being made finite. Consequently God, who must be elevated above all contrasts, could not be a matter for our knowledge, but only for our feeling." On the other hand the absolute causality, which is the only attribute we can ascribe to God on the ground of feeling, does gives us something more than is involved in feeling itself. It refers the world to God, as a totality, and finds in Him its

[1] *System of Christian Doctrine* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i, p. 208.

immanent cause. It implies an act or state of creation from eternity, and makes His power ultimately responsible for all that is. The power of God, however, is interpreted in such a way as to make it almost equivalent to a force of Nature. Schleiermacher apparently agreed with Abelard that God can in any case only do what He does, because He only does what it is becoming that He should do. On any other supposition God were self-limited, a conclusion which Schleiermacher cannot entertain. This involves a denial of the Personality of God, and to such a denial Schleiermacher seems to be committed if he is logical. He only evades the difficulty by conceding to devout feeling what he cannot grant on any other terms. As he says in the *Reden*: "For the enjoyment of communion with God, to attain the highest stage of devotion, and to interpret our own religious feelings to others, there lies on us an almost inevitable necessity of forming a personal conception of the Divine Being." Our author is more concerned to have God truly present to the feeling than to be able to frame exact ideas as to His personality. He repudiates the charge of pantheism, especially of materialistic pantheism, but he is at the same time quite content with a conception of God and of His operation in the universe which is dependent on the individual self-consciousness of the worshipper. In this respect, as in others, doctrine is but a shadow of religious emotions.

There is an interesting note to the *Reden* in which Schleiermacher defends himself against charges of atheism and pantheism based on his preference for impersonal terms in speaking of God. The following passage from it gives his conclusion on the whole matter and serves to supplement and clarify his treatment of it in the *Glaubenslehre*:[1] "As it is so difficult to think of a personality as truly infinite and capable of suffering, a great distinction should be drawn between a personal God and a living God. The latter idea alone distinguishes from materialistic pantheism and atheistic blind necessity. Within that limit any further wavering in respect of personality must be left to the representative imagination and the dialectic conscience, and when the pious sense exists, they will guard each other. Does the former fashion a too human personality, the latter restrains by exhibiting the doubtful consequences; does the latter limit the representation too much by negative formulas, the former knows how to suit it to its need. I was specially concerned to show that, if one form of the conception does not in itself exclude all piety, the other as little necessarily includes it. How many men are there in whose lives piety has little weight and influence, for whom this conception of personality is indispensable as a general supplement to their chain of causality which on both sides is broken

[1] Oman, *Reden*, p. 116.

off : and how many, on the other hand, show the deepest piety who, in what they say of the Highest Being, have never rightly developed the idea of personality ! " On Schleiermacher's own premisses this chain of reasoning is not unsound. Granted a religion that is based on feeling or self-consciousness, and some allowance must always be made for the personal equation. But that the sense of dependence on God and the attitude of the pious soul towards God will always require some view of Him as personal and able to respond to the appeal of persons may be taken for granted. It is equally sure that the apprehension of this will vary in different individuals in proportion to the intensity of their own personal life. Schleiermacher's position in this respect has both the strength and weakness of his whole theology.[1] But, as we shall see later, in dealing with the Person of Christ he supplies

[1] Cf. Munro's *Schleiermacher*, p. 302. " Schleiermacher hesitated to call God a Person : for he felt how difficult it was to speak of Him as personal without falling into anthropomorphic misconceptions and confusion. Yet he equally felt the necessity why He should be thought of as personal. Without this conception we cannot interpret to ourselves or to others the fulness of our religious emotion and experience. And so, in preaching and conversation, he used the personal names, though in exact thinking he preferred to regard God as the living God. The epithet ' living ' alone distinguishes the Absolute from materialism and pantheism, and atheistic and blind necessity. For him, as for the profoundest Fathers of the Church, there was but ' one only living and true God.' "

in a very forcible manner what to many seems very lacking in his doctrine of God. Indeed, one of the difficulties created by his whole treatment of this subject is the fact that to himself his theological system is always one, and so closely articulated that it can hardly be dealt with save as a whole. Apparent deficiencies on one side are made up on another, and if this had always been kept in mind the criticisms passed upon it would probably have been less severe. There are signs too that modern theology is not so far removed from the position which Schleiermacher takes up in regard to the divine personality as is sometimes assumed. Eucken's treatment of the subject, for example, is by no means unlike that which we have just described, and belongs to a type which is becoming more and more common. The following passage well illustrates the point :[1] "The idea of a Personality of God, whose inadequacy shows itself as soon as it severs itself from the Life-process of religion and appears in a doctrinal form, is, when found *within* the Life-process, entirely obvious and indispensable. Man can be clearly conscious of the symbolism of the idea, and yet, at the same time, grasp in it an incontestable intrinsic truth which he knows to be far above all mere anthropomorphism. For it is not a merely human greatness that has been transferred to the divine, but it is a return to the source of a

[1] *The Truth of Religion*, p. 430.

Divine Life and its mutual communication with man: all this is not an argument of man concerning God, because the divine must be apprehended through the divine within us. All attacks on the personal character of God root themselves finally in the fact that an energetic religious Life-process is wanting—a Life-process which considers the question not so much from without as from within. Whenever such a Life-process is found there is simultaneously found, often in direct opposition to the conscious wording, an element of such a personal character of God."

Schleiermacher deals with the attributes of God in the current terminology and from the standpoint of the religious consciousness. (1) God is eternal. By this, he says, we understand the absolute divine causality which, itself out of time, conditions all that is temporal and time itself. In other words, God is to him an eternal now, a measureless moment in eternity. He has neither beginning nor end, but is Himself the Lord and Creator of time. This idea carries with it also the idea of the divine changelessness. God is not a manifold but one, and so the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. He is not capable of growth, there is neither age nor youth in Him. Such terms as these, however, are used of God in an analogical rather than in an exact and scientific sense.

(2) God is omnipresent. By this we understand the absolutely unspatial (raumlose) causality

of God which conditions all that is in space along with space itself. This means that to God there is no here or there, no above or below. Space is to Him a form of being, not as it is to us a place. Schleiermacher makes this follow on the previous position, and again the terms used are more figurative than real. God is spoken of as the place for all things, as being eternally in Himself. The conception is made to involve His Immanence but in a form that is not incompatible with transcendence and is not necessarily pantheistic. There are no differences in the degree of His presence though there may be differences in our apprehension of Him. This idea need not carry with it as is often supposed the further idea of immensity. Apart from other difficulties which it raises, it cannot be used without imparting something of spatiality into the being of God.

(3) God is Almighty. This implies that the totality of Nature, including space and time, is grounded in the infinite causality of God. Also that the causality of God as manifested in our sense of dependence is perfectly expressed in the totality of being and that everything that flows from it actually happens and happens so. Thus what has not happened could not have happened. There is no distinction between God's will and God's power. The actual and the possible are the same. Omnipotence may be described as energy everywhere in action and equal to all

possible things. As in the case of human beings we may say that God's action is determined by His character. Omnipotence does not mean that He can do anything, but anything He pleases. His Power is subject to certain self-limitations, and among them must be reckoned not only those which are due to the moral nature of God Himself, but those which arise from the granting of freedom to His creatures.

(4) God is all-knowing. By this we understand the absolute spirituality of the divine omnipotence. God knows every individual in relation to the whole of which he is a part, and the whole in relation to every individual which it contains. We cannot, however, speak of God's knowledge in such a way as to ascribe human activities to Him, or put Him within antitheses, *i. e.* we cannot use of Him such terms as memory, experience, contemplation, foreknowledge. It may be doubted whether Schleiermacher would go so far as Rothe [1] and insist that God's knowledge as well as His power may be self-limited through human freedom, but he certainly seems to imply something of the kind. His knowledge again is part of His equipment for moral government.

To these main attributes which belong to God as absolute and serve to express His relation to the world in general, Schleiermacher adds certain others which can only be admitted as they

[1] *Dogmatik*, vol. i, pp. 110 ff.

possess dogmatic content, *i. e.* as they can be developed from the God-consciousness in us. They are unity, infinity and simplicity.

The divine unity is described in the phrase of Mosheim, "Quando ergo dicimus Deum esse unum, negamus Deum habere socium." The idea, therefore, becomes not so much one of a number of attributes, but the canon which underlies all consideration of the attributes and is as little capable of proof as the divine existence. It is a postulate of theological thinking. This would allow the idea to be expressed in either of the ways common to theology, viz. as a deduction from our study of the universe which points us to a single principle underlying the whole, or as an inference from our knowledge of personality which points to a character which is a moral unity, or consistent whole.

The attribute of infinity must be considered in connection with the other divine attributes. Expressed as the negation of limitations it becomes a further basal canon of monotheism. Omnipotence, *e. g.* may be described as the infinity of divine productivity, and omniscience as the infinity of divine power of thought. The conception as a whole implies the inexhaustible greatness of the divine. So the attribute of simplicity may also be described in mainly negative terms as excluding the conception of parts or combinations in the Deity. It means the inseparable mutual connection of all the

divine attributes and activities, and points to a being of God that is not a composite but one. It delivers the Godhead from all that belongs to the nature of antithesis.

In these attributes Schleiermacher finds the material which the Christian consciousness uses for building up its conception of God. In themselves they are neither complete nor sufficient. They must be supplemented by others, given also in Christian experience, which are necessary for the complete explication of the idea. It is perhaps unfortunate for the clearness and logical form of his system that Schleiermacher does not at once proceed to consider them in direct relation to his doctrine of God. As we have already seen, he distinguishes between the attributes which express the relation of God to the world in general, and those which depend on His attitude to sin on the one hand, and on His redemptive activity on the other. These he treats in connection with the doctrines of sin and redemption respectively. For our purpose, however, and for the clearer understanding of the system it will be better to deal with them now, as they strictly belong to the interpretation of the doctrine of God.

(1) The divine attributes which are related to the consciousness of sin. Schleiermacher's position is briefly that as everything in the religious consciousness must be referred to the divine causality, so sin and evil, as universal

facts of consciousness, come within the range of the absolute causality of God. He says, however,[1] "So far as sin and grace are antitheses in our self-consciousness, God cannot be thought of as the author of sin in the same sense in which He is the author of redemption. But so far as we have no consciousness of grace apart from the consciousness of sin, we must also assert, that to us the being of sin is ordained with and in subordination to the grace of God." Neither sin nor grace exist *per se*, but each of them only in relation to the other. Therefore our consciousness of redemption contains in regard to sin the communication of God's willingness and power to overcome it. This does not mean the entire banishment of the consciousness of sin, but a promise that it will be banished in time, and indeed that to God sin only exists to be overcome. God thus becomes the author of sin, but only in the sense that it is included in the scheme of Grace, and is gradually through grace to be made to disappear.

Schleiermacher elaborates this position in antithesis to the ideas represented by Pelagianism on the one hand and Manichæism on the other. The Pelagian position which makes man himself ultimately responsible for the activities both of sin and grace, while it would relieve God of the authorship of sin, would at the same time make redemption unreal. He argues that while

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, p. 80.

every act of sin belongs to the individual himself and cannot be laid to the charge of human nature as such, yet human freedom, if it is to have any reality, must be grounded in the divine causality. The same, therefore, will be true of sin. The consciousness of sin is the consciousness of an antithesis to the divine will, an antithesis which is to be removed by redemption. God has, in other words, ordained sin in order to salvation. As the God-consciousness grows in us the apprehension of sin becomes more vivid, and sin consists in the defects in the reign of the divine in us over the flesh, defects which, in their turn, produce in us the sense of the need of redemption.

Manichæism, which ascribes to sin and evil an existence in themselves and independent of God, is equally defective, because it ascribes redemption to the divine causality, but not sin. It thus loses for man both the feeling of absolute dependence and the feeling of an absolute causality in God.

Schleiermacher's doctrine that sin and evil are produced by human freedom, but are ultimately grounded in the divine causality, must be read along with his statement that they exist not in themselves, but strictly in relation to redemption. This may seem to open out a better justification of the general position than that which he himself gives. It may be agreed that in any purpose of God regarding the race,

human freedom must be contemplated. For it were at once a greater and better thing to make man free, than to make him a puppet under the rule of some iron necessity either of good or evil. Granted such freedom, however, and sin becomes at once possible with all its evil consequences. But it is both as possible and actual still under grace, and therefore must be regarded as part of the redemptive purpose of God. Both in creation and Providence God's good will is ultimately supreme, and it is the knowledge of this, or rather the faith that this is so, which gives the Christian solution of the problem of moral evil.

From the fact that the divine attributes are to be regarded as modes of the divine causality, and that in the same causality sin and evil are grounded, Schleiermacher derives the attributes of holiness and righteousness as arising by contrast from sin and evil. God is Holy. By the divine holiness we mean that aspect of the divine causality which involves the activity of conscience in all mankind in connection with the felt need for redemption. Conscience apprehends this divine causality as legislative, and so it becomes holiness in God. In other words, the divine holiness is reflected by conscience in man. It is not, however, a merely passive state, but involves a certain divine activity alongside of and in aid of that of humanity.

So, again, God is Righteous. This is the attribute which, in a condition of general sinfulness,

connects sin with evil. It thus corresponds with our consciousness of such a connection. Evil is apprehended as evil only in connection with sin, *i. e.* as being its punishment. Thus the divine righteousness is the divine causality apprehended as producing the sense of punishment as deserved. If it be objected that it should work in the same way with regard to rewards for doing well, Schleiermacher urges that it is not so because the Christian consciousness has no room for rewards. These are regarded not as of merit, but as of grace. God's holiness and righteousness are both alike contemplated in their strictly ethical rather than in any ceremonial or theological aspect.

(2) We turn now to those divine attributes which are related to Redemption. When we come to relate our consciousness of the union with God which is wrought by redemption to the divine causality, we find the planting and extension of the Church to be part of the divine government of the world. This, however, is not something merely supplementary to God's plan in creation. It is of the original purpose of God to redeem man in Jesus Christ, and in the operation of this purpose both nature and grace have their part. So the divine world government is not seen in mere isolated acts of interference in a world which otherwise pursues its own course, but in the co-operation of all things in revelation of the nature of God and in the establishment of the

divine kingdom. It may be said, therefore, that all things and their relations are what they are in virtue of the redeeming purpose of God in Jesus Christ. Thus the main object of the divine world government is the Church or Kingdom of God. This follows from the unity of the divine causality and shows the common division of the Providence of God into special and general to be unwarranted, and the conception of eternal damnation to be inconsistent with the purposes of God. Only as we view the divine causality from the merely human standpoint can we find a distinction of attributes in God's government of the world. It is possible thus to describe one side of God's activity in terms of will, and another side in terms of intelligence. The central point of the divine world government is the union of divine essence with human nature seen in redemption and in the Kingdom of heaven. This gives us the love of God which is expressed in the will towards union with another, and the wisdom of God which is the skill by which the totality of existences is made to serve the ends of God's loving purposes. In God there is a perfect correspondence of will and understanding such as does not exist in man. The love of God, the attribute by means of which the divine nature is communicated to us, is made known in the work of redemption. To say this is regarded by some as mere mysticism, and as giving too narrow an interpretation of the nature and work

of God. It is true that the love of God manifests itself apart from redemption, but there is no certain knowledge of it. The God-consciousness, which is the highest point of human attainment, while common to all men, does not reach its full fruition, save within the sphere of the Christian redemption. So, again, if it be contended that God's love is also manifested in the spiritual development of men made in the divine image, we may reply that no doubt men as such are conscious of God in some sense, but that their consciousness shows itself as fear rather than love apart from the revelation of God in the redemptive work of Christ. It is in Christ that the love of God is manifested and through Christ that the love of man for God is awakened.

When, then, we say that "God is love," we equate this attribute with God's being or essence. This is the only attribute which we can treat in this way. We cannot say with the same meaning that God is Power or Wisdom. For this difference we must give a reason, and show that it has not been reached by mere speculation. The conception of God's love is given to us immediately in the consciousness of redemption in a way that is not possible with the ideas of His power or wisdom, of His righteousness or holiness. These are but partial expressions of His nature and imply antitheses. They cannot be regarded as, in any sense, original expressions of the divine essence.

Schleiermacher would thus seem to make the love of God the regulative principle of His action in regard to men, and in a lesser degree of all His action. Its supreme manifestation is in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. In relation to the sin of men love becomes grace and fulfils its main end of salvation. Schleiermacher does not indicate as the modern theologies generally do, how the conception of God's love is completed and enriched by the love shown in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, apart from His death, and how this enlarges our conception of the worth of man in the sight of God. At the same time his description of God's love as not merely social, but redemptive, proved very fruitful for later speculation. As to the wisdom of God, Schleiermacher contends that we cannot speak of it with the same assurance, though it is to be regarded as part of the divine essence. Where there is almighty love there must be absolute wisdom. He regards God's wisdom and omniscience as the same, though the one gives us a view of His operations before they come to pass, and the other after they have come to pass. God's wisdom we see in viewing the world as God's perfect Self-communication, which becomes to our consciousness an increasingly perfect manifestation of His almighty love. From this point of view the world is a whole in which means and end are not so much distinguished as embraced in one. To the Christian the key to the divine

wisdom is redemption as revealed in Jesus Christ, and all things in the universe with which the divine wisdom has to do must be set down to the redeeming and renewing revelation of God. Thus nothing in the universe is outside the interest of the Christian. It will repay the most minute investigation as revealing the hidden depths of the divine purposes.[1]

Here Schleiermacher refines somewhat unnecessarily on the familiar view that God's wisdom is seen in the adaptation of means to secure His holy and loving ends. Nor does he

[1] For an interesting statement on Schleiermacher's use of the divine attributes, cf. A. Dorner's Geleitwort to the "Werke," p. xxii. "Aber alle diese Eigenschaften Gottes, die auf bestimmte Zustände des Subjekts in der Welt bezogen werden, müssen wieder zueinander in Beziehung gebracht werden, und dann ergibt sich, dass jede Eigenschaft Gottes nur in Verbindung mit der anderen gedacht werden darf, dass sie alle sich also in der letzten Einheit ausgleichen, und dass jede für sich nur ein unvollkommener Ausdruck des Göttlichen ist, nur der Ausdruck für eine bestimmte Art, wie das Gottesbewusstsein sich mit einem bestimmten Selbstbewusstsein verbindet. So erscheint er z. B. heilig, sofern das (strafende) Gewissen mit dem Gottesbewusstsein verbunden ist. Allein diese Eigenschaft Gottes muss sofort zugleich auf das Bewusstsein der Erlösung bezogen werden, wonach Gott Liebe ist, und beides wieder auf das allgemeine aller Religion zu Grunde liegende Abhängigkeitsbewusstsein, wonach Gott allmächtig ist. So hat also auch für das reflektive Erkennen, sofern es Ausdruck der Erfahrung ist, eine isolierte Eigenschaft Gottes keinen Wert, sondern nur Alle zusammen, die sich schliesslich in der Einheit ausgleichen, die wir nicht mehr begrifflich erfassen können, in der alle Vollkommenheit aber aufbewahrt bleiben soll."

distinguish, as is generally done, between omniscience as a non-moral attribute, and wisdom as having a moral content and aim. He is still somewhat under the influence of the artificial teleology of the Deist and Rationalist period, though he indicates the way of escape from it, by suggesting a divine purpose of love which runs through the whole history of the universe and culminates in the redemption in Christ Jesus.

The concluding chapter of the *Christliche Lehre* deals with the doctrine of the Trinity (*Von der Göttlichen Dreiheit*). This forms an integral part of Schleiermacher's doctrine of God, though he himself rather treats it as an appendix to the doctrine. He starts with the position that this doctrine, so far as its ecclesiastical expression is concerned, is not immediately given in the Christian consciousness, though it is a combination of doctrines which are so given. He urges that our whole conception of Christianity stands or falls with the idea of the union of the divine being with human nature, both in the Person of Christ and in the common spirit of the Church. Without the being of God in Christ it were impossible to concentrate the idea of redemption in His Person, nor could the Church propagate this redemption apart from such a union with God. These are the essential elements in the doctrine of the Trinity which controversy has brought out. Behind all the controversy is a truly religious interest, being the desire to con-

serve the absolute character of the Redemption by maintaining the union of the divine and human in Christ and rejecting the notion of inferior divinities in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed by the fact that those parties in the Church which have denied the doctrine of the Trinity have formed a different conception of the worth of Redemption, of man's need of Redemption as well as of the Person of Christ. In this form the doctrine of the Trinity is the keystone of the Christian system, giving as it does the identity of the divine nature in Christ and in the spirit of the Church with the nature of God Himself.

But here we must remain. The fuller exposition of this doctrine in the thought of the Church has not the same value. In the creeds and confessions this union of divine and human in Christ and in the spirit of the Church is traced back to an eternal distinction in the Godhead, independent of these acts of union. Then that member of the Divine being who was intended for union with Jesus Christ is called Son, and the remainder is distinguished from Him and from the Spirit as Father. As a result we have a conception of God as a unity of essence and a trinity of Persons. But such a supposition of eternal distinctions in the Supreme Being is no expression of the religious consciousness and could not be.

Nor is it possible to find such an idea as this

in the Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel. That doctrine has been used to support various conceptions of the union of the divine and human in Christ and its true interpretation is not yet fixed. There is no trace in John's Gospel of an all-round application of his doctrine, *e. g.* to the Spirit as well as the Son. Nor again do we have in the teaching of Christ and His Apostles any authoritative statement of this doctrine as a supersensible fact. Such a statement is not necessary to our faith in Christ or to fellowship with Him.

Schleiermacher further urges that the ecclesiastical doctrine raises intellectual difficulties for which we have no solution. He instances the familiar contradictions between unity of essence and triplicity of persons, and dismisses them as furnishing no confirmation of the fundamental truth of Christianity. He lays stress also on the difficulty of relating them to the divine causality and suggests that the only solution of this aspect of the problem is that of Origen, viz. that the Father alone is absolutely God and the Son and the Spirit are only God by participation. The source of the doctrine he finds in the heathen thought by which Christianity in the early days was surrounded and influenced. To us the value of the doctrine is in the affirmation that God is in Christ and in the spirit of the Church. This requires us to attempt to relate the doctrine to the idea of God in Himself and in the world, but

no satisfactory formula for this can be discovered which is likely to be permanent. Our attempts to express it are bound to be anthropomorphic, and therefore relative and incomplete. The problem will always remain and therefore it is better to regard the doctrine of the Trinity not as the foundation of any dogmatic system, but rather as an addendum and to be dealt with as such.

As regards Schleiermacher's doctrine of God as a whole we must repeat that it suffers from the disadvantage of not being stated systematically and connectedly, but only in fragments and as related to other parts of his theology. This may serve to conceal the loss of any objective conception of the divine, but it makes both criticism and interpretation more difficult. The position is also made more unsatisfactory by the fact that Schleiermacher's description of religious feeling or consciousness allows to it no content except the idea of dependence. This is not true either to psychology or to experience. The feeling of absolute dependence is not one with the consciousness of God, for that consciousness includes also at least a sense of relationship and of obligation. Consciousness thus gives to the idea of God a much richer content than that of mere causality, and it is the failure to recognize or allow for this which must be counted as a prime defect in Schleiermacher's treatment of the subject. In this respect as in the whole of his treatment of

the relation of God to the universe he is greatly influenced by Spinoza. As Strauss [1] says, "None of the leading propositions of the first part of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* can be fully understood, save as they are re-translated into the formulæ of Spinoza, from which they were originally taken. The relation of God to the world (which forms the basis of his entire theology), according to which both God and world are conceived as equal magnitudes, only that the former is the absolute and undivided unity, while the latter is the unity divided and differentiated, can be explained only from the relation of the *natura naturans* to the *natura naturata* of Spinoza." Thus it may be said with some justice that Schleiermacher's conception of God in the first instance is as but an expression for the "whereon" of our absolute dependence, or the correlative unity of the multiplicity in the universe. This is a point of view which seems to exaggerate the transcendence of God, and to place Him in a relation to the universe too far removed from ordinary knowledge. When this is corrected by the assertion of His immanence it is in a form which, as we have seen, makes it very difficult to distinguish it from pantheism. It is only fair, however, to remember that Schleiermacher stoutly repudiated both these conclusions. On the basis of the religious con-

[1] Quoted from by Pfleiderer, *Characteristiken und Kritiken*, p. 166.

sciousness he claims to reach a conception of God both transcendent and immanent, as that on which the whole universe depends, and that whose nature and works the universe manifests. But as to how the various statements he makes in regard to the nature of God, His attributes, etc., are to be related to the data of the religious consciousness he is by no means clear. We must recognize the fact that he here brings in considerations derived from other parts of his system to supply the defects of his theology pure and simple. In the *Glaubenslehre* as a whole, he perhaps carries systematization too far. The different parts of it hang together so closely that the statements in one have to be supplemented by those in the others. The doctrine of God, for example, cannot really be separated from the interpretation of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

THE central interest of any system of Christian Theology is in its doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ. On this everything else depends, and by this the system as a whole will be judged. Schleiermacher has no need to fear the test which is here implied. While his Christology cannot be regarded as complete, or as satisfactorily solving all the great problems involved, it is an immense advance on anything that preceded it, and it lays down principles that have been exceedingly fruitful, and that still underlie the most living treatment of the subject. As we might expect, his starting-point is not that of either the patristic or the scholastic theologies. He does not feel himself to be bound either to the Chalcedonian formula, or to any of the credal statements of the Church. He has no great faith in a metaphysical Trinity. It is not necessarily involved in the Christian consciousness, or in Christian experience. As usual, it is with this latter that he begins, and builds up from it as his base. When, too, Schleiermacher deals with Jesus Christ it becomes obvious that the consciousness of which he is speaking is not

some vague generalization, but the living experience of his own soul. In his attitude to Jesus Christ we can trace very clearly the effect of his pietistic upbringing; and it is this rather than his philosophy which shapes the course of his thinking. It is usual to charge him with inconsistency because his doctrine of the Person of Christ cannot be said to square with the presuppositions of his philosophical theology. But the truth rather is that while some parts of his system are almost too exclusively dominated by his pantheistic world view, in others he carries his experimental doctrine to its logical conclusions. Thus he distinguishes Jesus Christ from ordinary men not by any psychological analysis of His Person, but by indicating the control which He has over religious feeling and by the part which He plays in mediating to men the sense of God. He is the source of a new spiritual life of communion with God, which is first realized in Himself, and then imparted to those who enter into fellowship with Him. He is at once an ideal Person as well as an historical individual.

Schleiermacher elaborates his doctrine of Christ in that section of the *Glaubenslehre* which deals with the Christian's consciousness of grace.[1] This connection determines both his method and his conclusions. The fundamental element in the Christian's consciousness of grace is fellowship with God in Christ. In this are involved two

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 91–112.

factors, viz. Christ's activity and our receptivity. Thus our consciousness of grace yields, on the one hand, certain conclusions concerning the nature of Christ, and, on the other, certain conclusions concerning the relation between grace and the state of sin in the human soul, as mediated by Christ. Thus the doctrine both of Christ's Person and of His work grows out of the consciousness of grace.

In the foreground of Schleiermacher's Christology stands the conception of Christ as Redeemer. Though this should be regarded, properly speaking, as one of the points to be established, to those who approach the subject as he does on the basis of the Christian consciousness, it is an almost necessary presupposition. Though Schleiermacher distinguishes for the purposes of doctrine between the Person and the activity of Jesus Christ, he regards both of them as finding their full expression in redemption. Jesus is related to other men in such a way that "their conscious blessed relation to God is ascribed solely to Him as the author of it, and not in any degree to themselves or others." But such a relation involves certain consequences for the estimate of His Person, and gives Him an exclusive worth. On the other hand, if we regard Jesus Christ as one in whom human nature reaches perfection, then we predicate of Him something which is not due to His environment, but which gives to Him an unique position and

value. So whether we start with His Person or with His work we reach the same goal. In the discussion of the subject, however, we may follow the usual method and keep the two distinct.[1]

The Person of Christ. Schleiermacher starts with the Church or the Christian communion. Its life and activity depend on Jesus Christ. He is at once their source and their goal. Therefore they contain the key to the interpretation of His Person. He must be conceived in such terms as will account for the effects He pro-

[1] Cf. Edghill, *Faith and Fact*, p. 36. "Schleiermacher laid down with emphasis the true relation of our Lord to the community He founded. Moses may be taken from Judaism, and the Law remains: Mahomet may be taken from Islam, and the pious Moslem can still practise his accustomed ceremonies. But to sever Christ from Christianity, even in thought, is an impossibility. The Redeemer and the redeemed are indissolubly joined. For the Christian religion is a life, and its principle is: 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' The idea of the relation subsisting between Christ and the Church was rightly apprehended by Schleiermacher and exercised the greatest influence on Ritschl, who agreed with him that Christ is 'the founder of a society only in virtue of the fact that the members of that society become conscious through Him of their redemption.'"

Cf. also G. B. Foster, *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 36 *n.* "It is the imperishable merit of Schleiermacher to have made for our century the Christological problem a specifically religious problem. His exposition of the Doctrine of Christ's Person in the *Glaubenslehre*, where he says, that, 'die stetige Kräftigkeit seines Gottesbewusstseins, welche ein eigentliches Sein Gottes in ihm war,' is perhaps his most abiding contribution to Theology."

duces. The God-consciousness in Him must have existed in a perfect archetypal form and must have wholly determined His activities, before it could have been mediated through Him to others. Further it will be seen that the power resident in Jesus Christ must have found a perfect embodiment in the Christian communion. To the objection that the Christian communion is not a perfect vehicle for this life, but one ever in process of development, Schleiermacher replies, that the Christian communion ever looks forward to an ideal that is not in itself, but is furnished by an historical Person, and that this Person must therefore also be ideal and archetypal. Such a character would not consist in any mere outward perfection, but in the purity and vigour of his consciousness of God. If it be objected again that the human conditions under which Jesus lived rendered such perfection impossible, it may be answered that, only on the supposition of this uniqueness of character, could Jesus Christ have given to men the experience of redemption which obviously has come through Him. The only reasonable explanation of the appearance of His human life is that it was a manifestation of the miraculous. Along with the gradual unfolding of His natural powers there is given, in and with Him, a God-consciousness that dominates His whole being, and is His supreme characteristic. Though His physical and mental growth were conditioned

by the circumstances of His time and place in history, it does not follow that there was any room in Him for the sin-consciousness. His appearance in the world is thus, in one respect, miraculous, or supernatural, and, in another, is perfectly natural. His nature shows Him to be one with men, and this oneness is not destroyed by His sinlessness: for sin does not belong to the essence of humanity, but is a contradiction of man's native God-consciousness. So Jesus Christ becomes a worthy object of man's faith, which implies that He holds a relation to the human race which is unique and of which no other is capable. His perfect God-consciousness gives to His Person this special and peculiar significance. In the same way He becomes the medium of the revelation of God to man. It is through the God-consciousness in Christ that we can discern the presence of God both in nature and in life, and it is only through Him that God comes to possess other men. He is the second Adam in the sense that He embodies the new self-propagating spiritual life, just as the first Adam embodies the physical life of the race.

It is from the standpoint of this view of Christ's nature and of His relation to the world and to mankind that Schleiermacher proceeds to examine the doctrinal formulæ of the Church.

(1) As regards the Chalcedonian formula of the union of the two natures in one person.

The aim of this, he says, was to establish the possibility of communion between Christ and ourselves in the common life which originates with Him, and at the same time to maintain His divinity, or the being of God in Him. With the current expression of this Schleiermacher seems to agree, but criticizes the forms used. The name Jesus Christ is used not only of the subject of the union of the two natures, but also of the divine nature of the Redeemer before the act of union, which is regarded as the act of this Person Himself. But this is not the New Testament usage and seems to make the Personality of Christ that of the second person in the Trinity, and so dependent on the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine. But this doctrine confuses us by its use of the term nature both of the divine and the human. Nature and God, however, are really opposed. It is in a heathen sense that they are connected in the creeds. So again the relation implied here between nature and person is not in accordance with the general use of the terms. We may say that several persons have the same nature, but we cannot say that one person has two different natures. There cannot be a unity of life with a duality of natures, especially if the scope of one nature is wider than that of the other. If the unity of the person is to be preserved the two natures will tend to melt into a third which is neither divine nor human, or else one must

become subordinate to the other. The history of the doctrine exhibits both of these tendencies. Stated in this form, too, the doctrine raises the question as to whether there were two wills in Jesus Christ. To say that His will was human would be to derogate from His divine nature, and to say that His will was divine would be to derogate from His human nature. While if both wills are maintained, the unity of the Person is inevitably destroyed. There would also be the same danger of duality in regard to the understanding. No solution of these difficulties is afforded if refuge is taken in the idea of unity of the Divine essence rather than of the Person.

These familiar statements of the creeds Schleiermacher, as we have seen, condemns as being apart from religious experience and interest and as belonging to the region of barren speculation. He offers as a substitute for them a theory which may be stated as follows: The Redeemer possesses the same human nature as all men, but He differs from men in possessing also a God-consciousness which constitutes a personal existence of God in Him. His human nature becomes a perfect organ for the indwelling and presentation of the Divine. His human nature comes from the Divine, and therefore we may say of Him, "In the Redeemer God became man." In other words, we have in Jesus Christ a human nature saturated with the

consciousness of God, and impelled in all its actions by the Divine activity. This leads to the further point:

(2) In the union of the divine and human natures in Christ the divine alone is active or communicative of itself and the human alone is passive or receptive, but during the union of the two every activity is common to both. Only thus can we avoid the idea that Jesus Christ was of a certain nature at the beginning, and that something was added to Him in course of time. He and His work constitute a unity. We must, therefore, beware of saying that the Divine nature took up the human into the unity of its person. This would make the personality of Christ dependent on the second person in the Trinity, or on such a supposition his human nature only becomes a person in the sense in which the term is applied to the second person in the Trinity. But if we suppose Christ to have been a human personality merely in the sense in which the term may be applied to Deity, then we are not far from a purely docetic view. The alternative to this, under the supposition we are discussing, would be three separate self-existences, *e. g.* tritheism. The same difficulty arises if we make the human person in Jesus purely passive. All that we can mean by this is the implantation of the divine nature into the human, giving to the human the susceptibility to the divine. It is

through such difficulties as these that there arose the scholastic doctrine of the impersonality of Christ's human nature prior to the union with the divine. But this again creates difficulties of its own and would make the human in Christ less real than our humanity. In the same way the doctrine of the supernatural generation of Christ leads to an ascetic view of human nature, and is bound up with a certain conception of sin and of its relation to human nature as such. Schleiermacher claims that he secures all that was aimed at in the above doctrines by his conception of the Person of Christ as the product of a divine creative act manifested in His human development.

(3) Christ was different from all other men in virtue of His essential sinlessness, and His absolute perfection. His sinlessness is described as essential because its ground is in the conjunction of the divine and human in His personality. We can only say of Him "potuit non peccare" when we combine the statement with the other formula "non potuit peccare." But the question is, how are we to harmonize this with our knowledge of human nature and with the scripture statement, "He was tempted like as we are yet without sin." We cannot conceive of there having been any inner conflict in Jesus, because, if there were such, the traces of it would not altogether disappear. Must we, then, say that He was subject to development? Schleier-

macher thinks that the higher powers in Christ would manifest themselves only gradually and progressively, and would obtain the mastery over the lower powers as they grew in perfection. But this mastery would be at any moment complete. The growth of Jesus Christ from the innocence of childhood would be a continual advance in pure and complete spiritual vigour, and this is something quite different from human virtue. As regards the usual alternations of pleasure and pain, we may conceive His human nature as participating in these, but after a sinless fashion, meaning thereby that He ruled them and was not made subject to them. With the doctrine of Christ's sinlessness is connected the idea of His natural immortality. This is not contained in any of the doctrinal symbols, nor does it rest on any passage of scripture. It is rather due to the idea that death is the penalty of sin. All that we can say in regard to it is that for Jesus Christ death was no evil. Mortality and the capacity to suffer are bound up together. We must beware of the view of Christ's death which would make it the act of His own free-will. If by some miracle He made Himself mortal in order that He might be killed, then He could only be regarded as a suicide. It will be noted that such a view as the foregoing is very difficult to reconcile with the conception of a real humanity in Christ—of one who is "the First-born among many brethren."

The predicate of absolute prefection must also be explained in the light of the union of the human and divine natures in Christ. We may conclude that the divine would not lay hold of the human in Him in any such way as to produce an abnormality. So far as His body is concerned it must have been a fit instrument and organ for the divine. His perfection consisted not in any special knowledge or acquirements, for in these things He belonged to His age and to His people, but in His being the perfect embodiment of a perfect religion.

The questions of Christ's resurrection, ascension and return to judgment must be considered apart from the doctrine of His Person. They do not belong to it, because they do not belong to His redemptive activity, nor do they have any direct bearing on faith in Him. His continuous spiritual activity, which is necessary for the completion of His redeeming work, does not necessarily depend on them. His ascension may be regarded as an expression of His peculiar worth and divine power, and the doctrine of His second coming, though it does not necessarily belong to His dignity as Redeemer, is a means of satisfying the longing of Christians to become united with Him. The importance of these events, though they may not be essential to faith, consists in their bearing on the authority of Christ on the one hand, and on the testimony of the disciples on the other. The conclusion of the whole matter is that our

faith in Jesus Christ must not be made to rest on any individual events of His life, or on particular statements about Him, but on the total impression of His personality.

To the systematic statement of the doctrine of the Person of Christ which Schleiermacher gives in his *Glaubenslehre*, we may add certain presuppositions with which he deals in the *Weihnachtsfeier* and which are necessary for the complete understanding of his position. He starts, then, with the essential unity of God and man, on the one hand, and with the necessity of redemption to man on the other. Man *in himself* is spirit moulding itself into consciousness under earthly and temporal conditions. It is through these conditions that corruption comes about, and hence the need for redemption. The sphere in which man escapes from it, and builds up in himself the divine and spiritual consciousness is the Church. It is here that humanity becomes self-conscious. But this only comes about through some communication of the higher life, and we must seek the point at which this communication is made. That is to say, the Church must have a starting-point. This will be found in an individual who is in himself altogether man and yet at the same time God-man. Men are born again through the Spirit of God in the Church, but this Spirit proceeds from the Son of God, who himself needs no redemption, and is at the same time the Son

of Man. This spirit moulds itself into consciousness in Christ under earthly conditions. It is in virtue of this constitution of His nature that He becomes the redeemer of mankind. The position here indicated loses something of its arbitrariness when considered in relation to Schleiermacher's Christology as a whole, but it is not worked out with any philosophical completeness.[1]

Of this Christology in general then it may be said that, to Schleiermacher Christ is the creator of the specifically Christian consciousness, and the ground of its maintenance. He expresses in Himself the absolutely perfect relation to God, because

[1] It should perhaps be studied in relation with the *Leben Jesu*, of which Dr. Fairbairn (*Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 284) gives the following just characterization: "Schleiermacher created his Christ out of the Christian consciousness, while allowing the intellect, as critic and interpreter of the sources, the freest play. Throughout his favourite source is John: while the most transcendental of all the Gospels, it is the least miraculous, most exalted in its doctrine of the Person, most sober and natural in the details of its history. What distinguishes the Christ of John is the vividness and fulness of His consciousness of God, though it does not involve His identity with the Divine, only the unity of His thought and will and life with the Father. Strauss regarded the work as a challenge to criticism, and he criticized thus. Its Christ is not the Jesus of history, but an ideal creation, the last refuge of the ancient faith, built out of not confessional, but emotional and imaginative material: 'a reminiscence from long-forgotten days, as it were the light of a distant star, which, while the body whence it came was extinguished years ago, still meets the eye.'"

God abode fully in Him. Schleiermacher's whole approach to Christ and to the work of Christ among men, is through this Christian consciousness and not from the standpoint of any philosophical system. To him the whole thing is a matter of experience, and he needed to interpret not only the experience, but the Person who was its source and ground. At the basis of his interpretation lies the need for redemption and the consciousness of sin. In the society which Christ creates grace and redemption become the means towards a renewed life, of which He is the direct agent. He becomes this through His sinless perfection, which enables Him to communicate a similar nature to the consciousness of men. His character is thus archetypal, which means that he both originates and perpetuates a type. Though the perfection of it may never be realized by the society, or by any individual member of it, it remains in Himself a constant moral cause, and His Person becomes both as transcendent and immanent a means of its propagation. His sinless character could not have arisen by any natural means out of a normal humanity, but must have had a divine and transcendental origin. He thus embodies the divine perfection, by some special divine act, in order to transmit it. His Personality thus requires for its activity, an act of divine possession so real that His human nature becomes but the sphere and organ for the operation of

God. He becomes, therefore, in His own right the author of a new society which He was to fill with Himself in proportion as He was Himself filled with God, in order to the complete establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Schleiermacher's Christology is the centre of his theological system. It is through the historical person of Jesus Christ that Christianity comes into being, and He becomes for the Christian the interpreter both of God and the universe. He is so in virtue of that Christian consciousness which He creates and in which He manifests Himself. It is here too that we find the proof of the power and divinity of Jesus Christ, not in those attributes and actions on which the older dogmatic theologies dwelt, but in His moral character and in the perfection of His consciousness of God. It is these which give to Him His special significance, and at once express and condition His redeeming activity.

It is hardly possible to speak too strongly of the acuteness with which Schleiermacher maintains this position, and of the influence it has exercised in subsequent theologies. But it has also been strongly controverted, and that both from the orthodox and rationalist standpoints. Writers of both these schools join hands in pointing out the inconsistency involved in making Jesus Christ a new creation in human life, an ideal and archetypal personality, and yet denying to Him the miraculous character with which

theology generally invests Him. It is pointed out that as sinless He becomes a moral miracle, and that this is inconsistent with the naturalistic view of His personality and life. For example, Dr. A. B. Bruce [1] says: "It is evident that the doctrine taught in the *Glaubenslehre* of Schleiermacher concerning the person of Christ cannot pretend to be clear of all mystery. That gifted author did his best to reduce the mystery and the miracle to a minimum, that he might commend his Christology to scientific and philosophic tastes. He taught that Christ, though the ideal man, and therefore a product of the creative energy of God out of the common course, was nevertheless but the completion of the creation, that to which the rudimentary man of the first creation was destined to reach, and towards which the human race in its onward course had been steadily approximating. While, therefore, there was certainly manifested in Christ a divine initiative, it was an initiative which did no violence to the law of evolution: though there was a miracle it was a small one. But it is vain to attempt by such representations to conciliate unbelief. A little miracle is as objectionable to pantheistic naturalism as a great one: the creation of a *moneron*, the rudest embodiment of the principle of life, as much an offence as the creation of a perfect man. If, therefore, the Christology of Schleiermacher has nothing more

[1] *The Humiliation of Christ*, p. 207.

to say for itself than that it is an endeavour to present the faith of the Church concerning its Founder in a form which, while retaining something distinctly Christian, shall be as inoffensive as possible on the score of mysteriousness, it must be pronounced an utter failure." On the other hand, members of the Tübingen school, like Baur and Strauss, urge the same objection on the ground that it is impossible for the archetypal to be at the same time an historical person. All human development involves evil and conflict, and therefore if Jesus Christ was a human person He cannot have escaped these drawbacks. A similar criticism is made by Pfleiderer in the following terms :[1] " While the philosophers . . . see no cause for supposing that the relation of this ideal principle to the human personality in the Person of Jesus was essentially different from what it is in other men, Schleiermacher feels obliged to trace the origin of this common Christian spirit to a personality of unique perfection, or sinlessness and freedom from error. But he has failed to show either the congruity of this supposition with the sameness of Christ's nature and ours, or any good ground for the logical necessity of the supposition itself. For all that he alleges with regard to the experiences of the Christian community as to the common spirit of a strengthened and felicitated God-consciousness — experiences which confessedly

[1] *Development of Dogmatic Theology*, p. 118.

never go beyond a relative approximation to perfection and felicity—by no means presupposes an origin of absolute quantitative perfection of God-consciousness, the psychological possibility of which is exceedingly problematic: but that experience is fully accounted for on the supposition of the inward qualitative truth of the God-consciousness which is present in the community as a fact of experience."

A more pertinent criticism is that of Dorner when he urges that "the historical actuality of an archetypal Christ is not satisfactorily deducible from the Christian consciousness."[1] It is, no doubt, possible to appeal to the consciousness both of the Church and of the individual for experimental verification of the claims of Christ on the soul, but not of the historical reality of His Person. It is quite open to us to argue as Schleiermacher does that the collective Christian life, arising as it did in the midst of an alien and heathen society, must have had a Founder who first bore within Himself the new elements manifested in the Church.[2] But this remains

[1] *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Division II, vol. iii, p. 200.

[2] Cf. Dorner, *op. cit.*, p. 203. "Schleiermacher does not show us why Christ ought to be considered the archetypal embodiment of the new principle, and not merely the first or initiatory embodiment, endowed with power to implant the new principle in humanity. If we should say—it follows from the productive vigour of Christ, that He was the archetype: for the distinction between an archetype and

an historical argument independent of the spiritual effect of the Person on individuals. At times Schleiermacher tends to speak of Christ so much in terms of mere productive energy as to be in some danger of obscuring His Personality, and tends to find the real Person of Christ expressed in the new life of humanity. The fact is that his Christology, though a real advance on anything preceding it, is but imperfectly developed. He finds in Jesus Christ the origin of the communication of divine life to all men. He regards Him as standing in a universal or archetypal relation to the race, in His high-priestly

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a mere example is precisely that the former alone is able to act as a producing cause, whereas the latter, though it can incite, cannot produce; [and in fact according to Schleiermacher also, the Church has the power of generatively propagating the new principle, not because it is an example: not because its inmost essence is pure and holy, though the outward manifestation is imperfect; but in the last instance because it propagates the historical image of Christ] the answer might be given—that an example which approximated to the character of an archetype especially if faith should hold it to be an archetype, would be sufficient, supposing the only thing necessary to redemption to be a consciousness of the idea of the archetypal: and that it can be pronounced insufficient only on the supposition that we need something more than the prophetical office of Christ. This, as is well known, Schleiermacher also acknowledges; but he has not clearly shown how far an archetype has more influence than the awakening of the idea of the archetypal; or, vice versa, how far it is peculiar to the *realiter* archetypal, and to it alone, to act not merely on the intellect, but also as a real principle of life."

sympathy for whom He bears the sin of the whole world. What his critics required of him was that he should relate this view of Christ as the head of humanity to His standing as the Son of God. What, on the basis of this view, is the metaphysical explanation of His Person, and what His place in the Godhead? It must be admitted that Schleiermacher leaves these questions largely unanswered. Indeed, he is not concerned to answer them in the terms that orthodox theology desiderates. To him Christ is supernatural in the sense that He cannot be accounted for by any ordinary means, and that He lives the Divine life in perfection, realizing in Himself first what He lives to communicate to others. His Person is conditioned by His work and He is to be interpreted in virtue of His office as Redeemer or Mediator. The theory is remarkable for the scientific manner in which it is carried out, and for the spiritual insight which characterizes it. It may be justly criticized as being too subjective and as failing in many respects to fulfil the conditions which seem to be laid down in Biblical theology.

At the same time every credit must be given to Schleiermacher for his bold and definite breach with the traditional Christology. The full results of this are not yet apparent, though the work of Ritschl and his school shows how much may be accomplished by following the lines which Schleiermacher laid down. There is

an *ad hoc* element in the ecclesiastical doctrine which deprives it of all title to permanence, and makes some further attempt at reconstruction always necessary. Judged in the light of the controversies of the time the doctrine of the two natures on the one hand, and the various kenotic theories on the other, were alike pertinent and useful. But they were never more than stages in a process which has yet to be brought to completion. To the modern mind the traditional dogma tends to destroy both the unity of the Godhead and the unity of the Person of Jesus Christ. The terms in which it is stated are no longer relevant, and need to be superseded by modern conceptions of personality and development. As speculations in regard to the inner nature of the Godhead they carry us further than the compass of our finite minds would warrant. While recognizing to the full the temporary and historical value of the contribution they made to the subject, we may also be willing to follow Schleiermacher in his new departure, which, for his day, and for ours, is at least as valuable as these were for theirs. In basing his theory of the Person of Christ on the Christian's consciousness of the light and benefit received through Christ he was laying his foundations both broad and strong.

The positive contribution which Schleiermacher makes to Christology may be said to begin with the impression made by the Person of Jesus

Christ and communicated through His Church. This is a particular application of his theological principle of the independent worth of the Christian consciousness, or as we should put it in more modern language of Christian experience. In the relation of the Christian to God through Christ he found something which has an independent value of its own and which claims and deserves scientific treatment. Schleiermacher did not invent the Christian consciousness or the argument from experience, but gave back to them the place in Christian theology which they had lost. We deal elsewhere with the defects in his treatment of the subject, but these must not be allowed to obscure the great advantages to be derived from his application of it to the work and Person of Jesus Christ. The appeal of Christ to the Christian soul and the effect which He has produced on the consciousness of believers throughout the ages afford material which is indispensable for the building up of any sound theory of His Person. It may be urged that this type of evidence is only one among many, and that is no doubt true. But there is none that can be set beside it for the directness and universality of its appeal, and for the readiness with which it is accepted by those whom philosophical arguments leave altogether unmoved.[1]

[1] Cf. Stearn, *Evidence of Christian Experience*, p. 224. "However unique the relation of the believer to Christ through the Spirit may be, there is nothing unscientific

As Höffding says: "Schleiermacher never abandoned the conviction that the innermost life of men must be lived in feeling, and that this and this alone, can bring men into immediate relation to the Highest." For the Christian life, then, it is not a man's thoughts about Jesus Christ, his intellectual interpretation of His Person, but his individual attitude towards Him, that really matters, and that becomes the ground of a true understanding of His life and work.

This, then, leads us to the second point of positive worth in the Christology of Schleiermacher, which is the stress he lays on the apprehension of Jesus Christ as Redeemer. In all our study of the Christian consciousness, or of the worth of Christian experience, we have to ask: Consciousness or experience of what? It is too

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in the evidence he claims to have of the Saviour's living power and spiritual presence. The Christian is indeed dependent, here as elsewhere, on the objective Gospel, and perhaps to a greater extent than elsewhere. But he is able to recognize his Lord in his experience. The new life which the Spirit produces is the proof that Christ is on the throne: it comes only to those who comply with His conditions and exercise faith in Him, and it comes to all such. It bears His mark upon it. The new man is created in the image of Christ and His humanity: it manifests at once the prophetic, priestly, and kingly efficiency of the Saviour. The believer looks up to Christ through the Spirit, and knows himself to be a member of His mystical body. Through the Spirit he lives in communion with Christ."

Cf. also Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i, pp. 79–168.

often the case that the only answer to such a question is that experience consists in vague impressions and imaginations which vary greatly in different individuals and are purely subjective in their effects. But it was something very different from this which Schleiermacher had in mind, and it may be said also that it is something very different from this which is given in the universal Christian consciousness. The impression which Jesus Christ produces is the result of an *opus operatum*, of a work done by Him on and for the human soul. What Schleiermacher conceived this work to be, and how it was accomplished we have yet to see. For the moment we are simply concerned to note that his interest in Jesus Christ was practically confined to that in His life which served to set forth His character as Redeemer. The experience of Him which is distinctively Christian is experience of a personal salvation through Him. "The fact that only what Christ does corresponds perfectly to the divine will and expresses purely and completely the God-consciousness in human nature, is the foundation of our salvation to Him: and on the recognition of this everything that is distinctly Christian rests. In this is included the fact that, independently of his connection with Christ, neither any individual, nor any particular part of the collective life of humanity, in any era, is, in and of itself righteous before God, or an object of His approbation." In this

treatment of the subject there is, no doubt, some ground for the charge that Schleiermacher's Christology is largely *a priori* and determined by his general interpretation of Christianity. This, however, does not detract from the value of his contention that the greatness of Jesus Christ consists in the completeness with which He meets and answers man's need for redemption. A theory of His Person built upon this foundation is far more satisfactory than one which is merely the product of philosophical speculation. We cannot over-estimate the importance of the personal relation with Jesus Christ brought about by the experience of salvation through Him, and the faith to which such an experience gives rise is a practical attribution to Him of the religious value of God.[1] In this, as in other respects, Schleiermacher was building better than he

[1] Cf. Ritschl, *Critical History of the Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. Trans.), p. 449. "By Jesus and in Christianity redemption has become operative as a principle for the moulding of the devout self-consciousness, which does not take its shape from a legally enjoined doctrine and constitution, but from the never-ending value of the Redeemer for the society founded by Him. The ideal contents, and the definite historical form of this religion, thus coincide in such a way that the thought of redemption prevails in every devout Christian consciousness, simply because the beginner of that Christian society is the Redeemer: and Jesus is the founder of a devout society only in virtue of the fact that the members of that society become conscious through Him of their redemption."

knew, and failed to carry out in any logical manner the presuppositions of his own theory.

In dealing with the character of Jesus Christ Schleiermacher cannot escape the charge of inconsistency. Here, too, he seems to shrink from the full application of his own principles. The worth of Jesus lies in the completeness of His God-consciousness. This means for Him a character of absolute perfection and moral sinlessness. At the same time, however, Schleiermacher denies that Jesus is unique in any other sense. The perfection of His character does not involve necessarily any of those powers which are called miraculous. There may be a moral miracle in the Person of Jesus, but it does not follow from that that there is in His life and conduct any further departure from the human norm. The miracles of Jesus are matters for scientific investigation and do not belong, in any sense, to the sphere of dogmatics. The resurrection, for example, cannot be used in order to assist the framing of a doctrine of the Person of Christ, for it has no direct bearing on faith in Him. It cannot be in any way an expression of the religious consciousness of redemption, nor does it affect the redeeming activity of Christ. The appearance of Jesus Christ in the world and the character He assumed form the one great spiritual miracle in which all others are included. Words like these imply on the one hand a somewhat

incomplete understanding of what the redemption in Christ really means and requires, and on the other hand an unwillingness to carry out to the full the implications involved in the assumption of the moral perfection of Jesus. It is true that the miracles of Jesus are matters for investigation, and that the question of the evidence for them is of the first importance. But part of that evidence is the character of Jesus Himself and the place which He occupies in the divine economy of redemption. If we estimate these at their proper worth we shall at least be prepared to keep an open mind in regard to such a matter as the resurrection, which at least has a very intimate bearing, on the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ in the world to-day.[1] In view of

[1] Schleiermacher would probably have accepted the following statement of the position: "The moral qualities and influences on which Jesus relied during His earthly ministry are seen to be those which are most characteristically divine: and the proof of His uniqueness is found less in His ability to use supernatural means not open to His fellows, than in the extent to which He showed Himself master of the moral and spiritual influences to which the deepest in man responds." "But it is one thing to hold that moral forms are supreme in the universe, and another to suppose that this supremacy must show itself by physical means. The difficulty with the older conception of Christ's deity was that it did not always observe this distinction. It is characteristic of moral supremacy that it can manifest itself only by moral means: and the effort to supplement the moral proof of Christ's deity by the evidence of physical

Schleiermacher's insistence on the importance of the relation of Jesus Christ to the fellowship of believers it is surprising that he should not have given greater weight to the idea of the resurrection and the risen life of our Lord.

Generally speaking it may be said of Schleiermacher's Christology that it is unsatisfactory on the historical side. His treatment of the Christian consciousness and of the relation of Jesus Christ thereto, would have gained greatly from a more careful historical study of religious experience within the Christian Church. This is one of the directions in which modern theologians are showing their advance upon him while using the materials he has provided. In the same way his treatment of the life of Jesus is too speculative and needs to be revised in the light which modern historical criticism has provided. His use of the scriptural sources is quite uncritical and he draws on the Fourth Gospel rather than on the Synoptic writers for his material for the doctrine of the person of Christ. There is a good deal of truth in the charge that he made his theology determinative of his Christology and that he

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power, as in the traditional form of the argument from miracle, is really the denial that the righteousness and love which we have seen to be supreme in God, are the world-conquering powers which Christian faith affirms them to be."—ADAMS BROWN: *Outlines of Christian Theology*, pp. 346, 347.

sought not the Jesus of history, but a Christ who fitted into the preconceptions of the *Glaubenslehre.* The place which he gave to the self-consciousness of Jesus in his system made it imperative that he should interpret that self-consciousness historically as well as psychologically, and it cannot be said that he satisfies legitimate requirements in either respect.

CHAPTER VI

MAN AND SIN

In the *Glaubenslehre* the section on the Person of Christ is immediately followed by one dealing with the work of Christ. This subject, however, is treated in close connection with, and indeed assumes, certain conclusions which Schleiermacher has already reached in regard to human nature and sin. It will be convenient therefore to deal with these now in order to a clearer understanding of the doctrine of redemption which is based upon them. At the same time it should be pointed out that Schleiermacher's method here is not at all analogous to that usually followed by dogmatic theologians. He does not proceed to frame his doctrine of redemption on the basis of a doctrine of sin intellectually conceived, or scripturally revealed. Rather he connects throughout his idea of sin with the consciousness of redemption regarded as part of a universal God-consciousness. Sin itself is an antithesis of the religious self-consciousness. This idea is not always logically carried out, but it is important to keep it in mind in any attempt to discover Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin.

Schleiermacher's anthropology is assumed rather than scientifically stated.[1] He regards man as a religious animal and as having started from a condition of original perfection, in so far as he contains within his nature from the first all that is necessary for a perfect religious development. The tendency to God-consciousness is an inseparable condition of human nature; without it human nature would cease to be as such. There is in man an inner impulse to realize and to externalize this consciousness, the results of which are writ large in the history of religions. This means that in primitive man this God-consciousness must have existed to an extent which would make it possible for him to propagate it. That is to say, it is an original capacity which may or may not be developed. But it belongs to all men [2] and reaches its highest manifestation in Jesus Christ. An "immediate consciousness of the Deity as He is found in ourselves and in the world" is the ultimate of religion and this religion is given in the nature of man.

[1] Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, 57–61.

[2] Cf. *Reden* (Oman's Trans.), p. 72. "Wherefore humanity and religion are closely and indissolubly united. A longing for love, ever satisfied and ever again renewed, forthwith becomes religion. Each man embraces most warmly the person in whom the world mirrors itself for him most clearly and purely. He loves most tenderly the person whom he believes combines all he lacks of a complete manhood. Similarly the pious feelings are most holy that express for him existence in the whole of humanity as blessedness in attaining or of need in coming short."

Sin,[1] then, is the antithesis or incompleteness of this religious self-consciousness, which is never present in perfection in any human being. It is always found in relation to or combination with the sensuous consciousness. The non-Christian state of man is one in which he is subject to this lower consciousness. The religious self-consciousness does not dominate his life. This means a certain sense of dissatisfaction or even pain in relation to the God-consciousness. For this a man in the Christian state feels himself to be responsible. It is, thus, something more than failure to correspond with his environment. The subordination of the God-consciousness comes from his own act and not from any external source. This means that he regards it as sin. As Schleiermacher says:[2] "The claims of the Spirit being uniformly the same, it appears uniformly, where it falls short of attaining these claims, as if it were repulsed and conquered; therefore the man is in a state of sin." So far Schleiermacher clearly regards man as free. He is free to sin, and the fact makes him responsible for the sin he does. But then comes a curious limitation of his freedom. Apparently man is not free to overcome sin. When the God-consciousness becomes supreme in his life, it means that he has turned to God and entered into communion with Him. But he has not done this in virtue of his own activity. All

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 62–79. [2] Ibid., 67, 2.

Christian experience attributes the supremacy of the God-consciousness in man to an act of God. It is a redemption which comes about by the will of God. It proceeds from Jesus Christ, and is due to His activity, a work of Grace leading to a consciousness of Grace, which stands in antithesis to the consciousness of sin. In the state of Grace the God-consciousness is never perfect, but the sin-consciousness is gradually diminished under its increasingly pervasive power. Therefore the doctrine of sin is and always must be determined by the doctrine of Grace.

From this point Schleiermacher proceeds to unfold the consciousness of sin always on the assumption that there cannot be a doctrine of sin in and for itself, but only as considered in reference to redemption. On any other basis we deny to sin a place in the divine causality, and so fall into heresy either of the Pelagian or Manichæan type. And yet if we refer sin directly to the divine causality we seem to destroy the unity and harmony of the divine nature. Schleiermacher's theory attempts to combine these apparent contradictions, with what success we shall see later.

In dealing with sin as a state of man, he insists that it must always be considered from the standpoint of the personal consciousness. He identifies sin and the consciousness of sin. It exists in all stages of human development and expresses itself as a strife between lower and higher impulses, between the flesh and the spirit.

Historically this struggle may be regarded as due to an earlier sensuous state in which the higher nature of man was not yet differentiated. As man's development does not follow a straight and even course, there is always a consciousness of struggle between different powers of the nature, and this consciousness constitutes sin. It is due to man's original perfection, and does not annul it. It comes about through the contrast between the state of man in which the God-consciousness appears and his original undeveloped sensuous state. It is thus due to the lack of conformity between the will-power and the judgment. At the same time sin must not be regarded as unavoidable. It represents a confusion and hurt in our nature in consequence of which we have need of redemption, and it is only in relation to redemption that sin is or can be considered. The consciousness of it is not due to the precepts of the law, but rather to the manifestation in history of a perfectly developed God-consciousness in the person of the Redeemer. But though we come to a personal consciousness of sin through our own personal acts, the final ground of it is found not in the personal consciousness, but in the race. Then there is such a thing as hereditary sin, and this Schleiermacher next proceeds to discuss.

He means by hereditary sin a state of sinfulness existent in man prior to any act of sin. This state of sinfulness is of a negative rather

than a positive kind. It consists in an inability to bring the whole nature under the influence of religious feeling. This inability does not amount to incapacity, for that would nullify the work of redemption altogether. Man's nature, therefore, is always capable of good, but is marred by an inability to bring this capacity to fruition, and this inability comes from a source outside one's own activities. What, then, on this showing, becomes of responsibility and guilt? Schleiermacher seems to attach this, not to the natural sinfulness of man, but to the acts of sin which are its outcome. But, he urges, this guilt is not wholly individual. The community has its share in it,[1] because

[1] This is the reverse side of that solidarity of the race to which Schleiermacher gives varied expression. Cf. Troeltsch, *Die Sociallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, p. 929. "Jeder Kenner von Schleiermachers Reden weiss, wie hier geradezu die spiritualistische Idee von einer unmittelbaren Offenbarung des religiösen Gefühls und einem sich gegenseitigen Verstehen aller Geisterfüllten und aller Offenbarungen verkündet ist, wie auch die sozialogischen Folgerungen schonungslos gezogen sind: eine fliessende Gruppenbildung, um besonders starke Führer und Propheten geschaart, verbindet immer neu und wechselnd die Gläubigen in gegenseitiger Darstellung und Erweckung des ihnen allen einwohnenden Gefühls: der Geist bleibt nicht gebunden an die historische Gemeinschaft des Christentums, sondern kann, über es hinausschreitend, das an sich überall identischer religiöse Gefühl zu immer neuen konkreten Gruppen sich vereinigen lassen: die Propheten und Offenbarer, Christus eingeschlossen, sind nur Anreger und Entzünder des bei Jedem einigen und unmittelbaren religiösen Lebens."

every individual is an integral part of the community and indissolubly bound up with its life. So the self-consciousness is always a race-consciousness, and every act of sin is at once caused by others and causes others in its turn. The consciousness of sin is a race-consciousness. It is this fact which is responsible for the Church doctrine of original sin, and for the terms in which it is usually described. In spite of it, however, the God-consciousness is never wholly lost from humanity, nor does the striving after it ever altogether cease. It is this effort which makes redemption possible, and redemption, too, is not only of the individual but of the race. It may be said, therefore, that Schleiermacher accepts the doctrine of universal sinfulness but not that of total depravity.

He refuses altogether to accept the scriptural doctrine that man's sin is due to the act of Adam, and that human nature was different before the fall of Adam from that which it became afterwards, and in consequence of that fall. To suppose anything of the kind would be to destroy the unity of human nature and so the unity of the race and of the race-consciousness. He also regards it as incredible that any individual should by his personal action be able to change the whole race of man. Any attempt to account for the first sin by the evil passions of human nature, either presupposes what is to be proved, or else leads to the Manichæan assumption of

the supremacy of evil. The sinfulness of man is inborn and existed from the beginning. Only on such an assumption could there be a universal capacity for redemption. This is quite in consonance with his general principle, that the idea of sin is conditioned by the assurance of redemption.[1]

Turning then to actual or individual sin, Schleiermacher regards the fact that hereditary

[1] Cf. for this whole subject *Glaubenslehre*, 71, 2, 3. "If in every individual sin is, on the one hand, produced by the sins of others, but is, at the same time, on the other hand, by the personal actions of each individual propagated to others and confirmed in them, then is sin in all points a thing of society. Whether it be regarded rather as guilt and as work, or as a life principle and a state, in either respect it is thoroughly social, not accruing to each individual apart and relating to him alone, but in each one the work of all, and in all the work of each one: indeed only in this social character can it be truly or wholly understood. Hence also the doctrinal propositions which treat of it are by no means to be understood as expressions of the personal self-consciousness, with which the doctrine of actual sin has to do: they are expressions of the common consciousness. The state of fellowship implies the solidarity of all places and all times in regard to the matter before us." "Guilt it is called with perfect accuracy only if it is regarded simply as a joint deed of the whole race, for it cannot be guilt of the individual, at least so far as it is produced in him." "Were the consciousness of sins no common feeling, but a personal one in each individual, there would not necessarily be connected with it a consciousness of a general need of redemption. Hence also the two things are wont to go together, that original sin as common to the race is denied, and that the worth of redemption by Christ is rated at a lower value."

sin is continually showing itself in this form as another expression of the Christian consciousness. He goes so far as to say that we are conscious, not merely of our own sin, but of the sin of others. Both the consciousness and the sinfulness are universal, and the inference is that both are also necessary, though Schleiermacher, of course, shrinks from any such conclusion as regards sin. The active principle in this consciousness is a vivid conception of the person of the Redeemer. This shows how we are implicated in the universal sinfulness, while the Redeemer stands out of any relation to it. The distinctions between men are not, as it were, degrees in sinfulness, for all alike have sinned, but are to be found in their power of partaking in the Redeemer's God-consciousness. In the case of the redeemed the God-consciousness gradually prevails over the sin-consciousness, and becomes the guiding principle of life. Thus it is possible for God to pardon the sins of the redeemed because they are no more than a kind of reversion to a sinful state whose power is gradually diminishing. It is otherwise with the unredeemed, in whom the sinful state is still dominant.

Schleiermacher's doctrine as thus sketched is an interesting example of the revolt from the Augustinian position. Like all philosophical theologians he finds himself faced with the problem as to how guilt can be attached to birth sin. He declines the Augustinian solution which

makes the whole race sin in Adam, and therefore share in Adam's responsibility; and, though he repudiates Pelagianism, he does come to the conclusion that guilt can only be attached to the individual act of sin. At the same time he will not separate this act from the universal sin-consciousness. One great defect of his teaching here is his failure to give to the will its true function, and the lack of a fully developed doctrine of human freedom. On the other hand, we owe to Schleiermacher that fuller recognition of the social character of sin and evil, which has been so important a factor in the modern development of the doctrine.[1] But he is still so far

[1] The following statement of the modern view by Tennant (*Original Sin : Essays for the Times*, p. 28), will show how near Schleiermacher came to it, from his own point of view. "The tendency of man to indulge his natural animal propensities was not at first evil, because the moral law with its 'Thou shalt not,' was as yet unknown. It is with difficulty that these natural *non-moral* tendencies are brought under the dominion of the higher nature; and every failure to bring these under such dominion constitutes a sin. What is natural cannot be called evil, and what is evil cannot be called natural, for the natural is non-moral and only becomes evil when the nature has been superseded by nurture, by recognized sanctions of right and wrong. And the transition from animal innocence or non-morality to rational and moral evil is gradual. The moral law and the conscience of the race are things that were not 'given' in a moment: they have had a long history. Morality, in fact, is a social creation. At first, the individual was relatively insignificant as compared with the tribe, and tribal opinions and sanctions were expressed in tribal custom.

under bondage to the ecclesiastical tradition as to assign a moral value to the nature and propensities of man prior to any conscious act of sin. It is true that he starts with an original perfection rather than with an original depravity of the race, but he fails to grasp the neutral and non-moral character of those natural appetites which in the earliest stages of human development are neither to be regarded as sin nor as virtue, but supply the raw material for both.

Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin has met with a good deal of criticism, notably from Julius Müller and Ritschl. It will be at once fairer and more to the purpose to examine their treatment of it, than to test it by the standards of modern evolutionary teaching. Müller,[1] after

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The further back we trace man, the less we find him the person, the individual, and the more completely is he merged into the family and the tribe. Custom eventually passes into formulated law, and through reflection on particular cases of such law arises introspective morality, the sense of personal obligation. All this was accomplished by a long series of slow and gradual stages. Consequently the origin of sin did not take the form of an abrupt and inexplicable plunge, such as the literal interpretation of Genesis suggests, but was a gradual process. Sin began when certain practices, hitherto non-moral, were persisted in after that they were discovered to be contrary to some recognized sanction, which would be at least as low in moral rank as tribal custom. Thus the first sin, if such words have any meaning, instead of being the most momentous in the race's history, would rather be the least significant."

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i, pp. 370-391.

pointing out certain inconsistencies between Schleiermacher's earlier and later references to the subject, fastens on two points of vital importance. The first of them has to do with the question of freedom and the relation of the will to sin. Granted that sin is the result of the dominance of the sense-consciousness over the God-consciousness, and that the relation of the two determines the moral life, then we are driven to one of two conclusions. Either, on the basis of our absolute dependence on God, and of His absolute determination of our consciousness, which is its consequence, sin becomes an impossibility; or some third factor must be introduced which shall preserve both our freedom and our responsibility. On this latter point Müller argues:[1] "Must we perhaps regard the especially frequent use of the expression, tendency, direction, toward the God-consciousness as being something more than a descriptive one? Then it would necessarily follow, that the God-consciousness and the sensational consciousness are no longer the two sole factors of every real pious excitation; but that between these two there stands still a third, which gives itself either a direction toward the God-consciousness and its union with the sensational consciousness, or a direction away from the God-consciousness, and opposing the union of the sensational consciousness with the same; and that this third factor

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 380.

contains the real causality of the ever-present condition, and of the hindrance or requirement of the activity of the God-consciousness contained in the same. If it were so meant, what else could one regard this third factor than as an ability of either—or, an optional ability, than as the *freedom of the will?* In this case, it were this freedom surely, which furnished the ground for the possible origin of evil." Müller concludes, however, that such an interpretation of Schleiermacher is inadmissible. It would nullify his doctrine of absolute dependence. Therefore we must believe that his use of phrases like tendency, etc., is merely figurative, and we are shut up to the conclusion that on the basis of his teaching sin becomes virtually an impossibility.

His next criticism is equally important and has to do with the relation of sin to the divine causality. He argues that Schleiermacher's contention as to the absoluteness and supremacy of the will of God seems to shut him up to one of two conclusions in regard to the problem of evil. Either evil is ordered and produced by God Himself, or else it must be altogether excluded from the divine causality and so becomes a mere negation. But Schleiermacher has his own way out of this dilemma which may be described as follows :—The absolute causality of God is the groundwork of all our notions about the Divine Being. Therefore there is no

independent finite causality which is not divinely brought about. Sin, therefore, is appointed by the absolute producing will of God. To deny this is to deny the absoluteness of the Divine causality and to land ourselves in Manichæism. Yet we cannot avoid the opposite conclusion, that sin being a contradiction of God's will cannot have its cause in God. Though we may distinguish God's *producing* will from His *imperative* will, the two cannot be opposed. Therefore we must so conceive sin as to avoid ascribing to the divine causality something which cannot be legitimately grounded in it. There are, as we have seen, two elements in sin, the sense-consciousness and the God-consciousness. Both may be deduced from the divine causality, but sin only arises when the God-consciousness cannot control the sense-consciousness. This non-powerfulness of the God-consciousness is due to the gradual character of man's spiritual development. Sin, therefore, is something privative, an imperfection or negation, in connection with which we can no longer speak of a producing will of God. The doctrine described in these terms Müller criticizes as follows :[1] " It is clear that in these sentences we are on the direct road to the most complete Pelagianism. . . . Sin must here of itself constantly disappear in the process of development : the need of a redemption is no longer to be shown : the contrast of sin and

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 383.

grace, in so far as both expressions denote real moments of consciousness, resolves itself into a distinction of degree: and as in the place of conversion and regeneration of man we have a direct course of gradual progressive improvement, so also Christ is no longer the absolute turning-point, but only a, though one ever so significant, point of transition in the history of our race." Again:[1] "If we more closely consider this opinion of the relation of sin to the divine causality, we find ourselves placed upon a double standpoint. On the one, the objective, sin is nothing else than the expression of a negation, which attaches to the graduation of our moral development, therefore for God just as little present, as such, as everything else which we conceive of merely by negation, and therefore also not to be reduced to an especial divine causality: for in the divine causality only that which has being is grounded, although naturally, as individual, everywhere equally with its determinate bound. On the other standpoint, the subjective, but which is not perhaps an arbitrary one, but one ordered for us by God, and implanted in the human consciousness: sin is positive resistance against the determinating power of the God-consciousness, and, as such, our own act, our guilt."

From the standpoint which a theologian like Julius Müller occupies, and from the premisses

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 385.

with which both he and Schleiermacher start, these criticisms are abundantly justified. There is real inconsistency in Schleiermacher's position, and a manifest failure to press to its logical consequences his doctrine of the divine causality. On the other hand, from the standpoint of most modern theories of sin, and of any reasonable doctrine of human freedom, there is much to be said in extenuation of Schleiermacher's reasoning. In this respect, as in others, he was building better than he knew, and preparing the way for that deeper understanding of the subject which was to put his own treatment of it in the shade.

This becomes still further apparent in the criticism which Ritschl directed against Schleiermacher's doctrine. He deals first [1] with Schleiermacher's conception of sin. Sin is " the impediment to the determining force of the Spirit which is caused by the independence of the sentient functions." This means that it is accompanied by the consciousness of freedom, as that which in Kant's sense, gives itself an absolute law and sets before itself an absolute end. But, argues Ritschl, it is only the teleological self-judgment of the spirit which makes its hindrance by the flesh to be conceived of as sin. This is the sole valid standard by which the facts can be judged, a standard which Schleiermacher repudiates openly, but secretly

[1] *Critical History of the Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. Trans.), p. 455.

always recurs to. Next, Ritschl criticizes Schleiermacher's attitude to the Church doctrine of original sin, and shows how he glosses over the difference between his own view and that of the orthodox exponents of the ecclesiastical doctrine. Schleiermacher makes original sin the sufficient cause of all actual sins, but at the same time defines it as a mere disposition. But if it is no more than this, then something, namely, an act of will, must come in to reinforce it before it can eventuate as it does. On Schleiermacher's theory there is no such thing as original sinfulness. Sin only begins with the individual act (cf. quotation from the *Glaubenslehre* on p. 150). Ritschl points out how Schleiermacher takes up entirely different ground from that of the Augustinian doctrine, and yet at the same time persists in retaining its traditional expressions. But there is a very real difference between the two, which becomes sufficiently apparent if we liberate Schleiermacher's teaching from these current ecclesiastical expressions. Augustine maintained the guilt of inherited sin in the individual in order to preserve the sacramental character of baptism and its retrospective action in the forgiveness of sin. But Schleiermacher neutralizes the distinction between inherited and inbred sin and the sin of personal action, in order to establish the fact that the guilt with which redemption has to deal is the guilt not of individuals but of the race. Ritschl then proceeds

to criticize further in the following terms:[1] "How far Schleiermacher withdrew from the traditional path is specially shown in his denial of the significance of original sin as punishment: for this is an essential feature in Augustine's doctrine. He alleges that punishment is always a superadded infliction: but sin can never be a thing superadded, therefore punishment must always be something which is not sin in him who suffers it (*Glaubenslehre*, 71, 2). In the same direction he guards himself against the view that the true feeling of the need of redemption is to be brought about by means of the consciousness of having deserved punishment (71, 4). The purity of Christian piety would be disturbed if one hoped above everything else, to be free from the evil consequences of sin, and not directly from that which impedes the God-consciousness. This demand promises to the doctrine of redemption a different aspect from that which it receives in the traditionary form."

Ritschl then goes on to show how it was always the aim of the ecclesiastical doctrine to make redemption a redemption from the punishment of sin. Because of original sin the whole human race was regarded as under condemnation, but original sin itself was a punishment, that, namely, with which God had arbitrarily visited the transgression of Adam. The tendency of the Church was to lay all stress on original sin, and, in com-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 461.

parison with it, to neglect both individual sinfulness and the evil consequences of sins. Under the teaching of the men of the Enlightenment, however, these things had come into new prominence, especially as the condemnation of the race had been mitigated by the idea of possible reformation after death. It is from this point of view that Schleiermacher approaches the problem, and for that reason he is inclined to neglect the assumption of the eternal condemnation of the sinful race of man, and to frame his doctrine both of sin and of evil in view of the certainty of redemption.

This then leads us to consider the doctrine of evil which Schleiermacher frames as a consequence of his theory of sin and as parallel to it. The original perfection of human nature means that man is naturally in harmony with the external world.[1] But with the triumph of the flesh over the spirit, *i. e.* with sin, there comes a breach of this original harmony, and those forces of Nature which would otherwise further human development seem to oppose it, and thus become evil. This type of evil may be described as natural, but there is another kind, namely, social, caused by the sin of one individual producing evil consequences for others. Sin and evil are thus related as cause and effect. In the light of the universal divine causality evil may be regarded as the punishment of sin. As such,

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 75–78.

however, it must not be understood merely of the individual. Sin, guilt, and evil all belong to the race in its totality. But it must not be forgotten that evil may be looked at in another light as giving the impulse to spiritual and moral development.

On this position Ritschl remarks:[1] "I unreservedly concede that the whole human race must be regarded as the subject of sin, and that God's justice ordains common evil as the punishment of common sin; but the religious conviction of that can exist only in the individual subjects whose personal consciousness of guilt widens into the recognition of that truth, and who accordingly patiently submit to the measure of social evil which falls to their lot—conscious that by their own fault they have implicated themselves in the coil of evil. This fact of the Christian consciousness is not brought into clearness by Schleiermacher, because, with him, in consequence of his overlooking the teleological point of view, the standard for the freedom of the individual in the community disappears."

We have given these characteristic criticisms of Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin at some length, not because there is any finality about them, but because they open up the whole subject for fresh discussion in the light of more modern views of man and God and their relations. The investigations of modern psychology on the one

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 464.

hand, and a thorough-going application of the theory of evolution on the other, will lead us to somewhat different conclusions from those which Schleiermacher attained. At the same time they will help us to see how radical was his treatment of the subject, and how entirely justified was his departure from the familiar ecclesiastical position. The great weakness of his position, of course, is his hesitation to grant human freedom in its fulness, and to accept its inevitable consequences. This is not compensated for in any adequate measure by his assertion of a collective, a racial, responsibility. He does not sufficiently distinguish between the possibility of collective sin and collective guilt. The familiar couplet of a modern poet,

> "The sins that men do by two and two
> They shall pay for one by one,"

shows more real insight into the general question than many pages of the kind of discussion in which theologians are wont to indulge.

Further, Schleiermacher does not sufficiently distinguish between sin as a theological and philosophical idea and sin as a religious experience. He might have brought the Christian consciousness into play here more effectively than he does, and in that case he would not have overlooked the aspect of sin as an offence against God and a transgression of the divine law. Any philosophical view of sin which diminishes the

sense of human freedom tends to ignore the positive side of moral wrong-doing and to make evil merely "good in the making." There is, no doubt, a truth here, but it may easily be over-emphasized, and it entirely fails to account for the facts of experience. Even if sin be explained as a form of growth ordained for us with a view to the redemption in Christ, and as an incentive to that redemption, the explanation does not account for the facts of the case.

Schleiermacher's teaching on sin is further conditioned by his idea of God. His pantheistic tendencies, and his insistence on the view of God as absolute causality, lead to a weakened conception of human personality and freedom. The Biblical idea of sin depends on a marked moralization of the Divine Being, and without some clear sense of God's holiness and of the obligation which that involves for His creatures, the sense of sin is sure to be deficient in moral content. What Schleiermacher says about God's holiness, as causing us to regard every deviation from His will as sin, is very difficult to reconcile with his teaching as to God's will being the cause of sin as of everything finite. It would almost seem as though he had not thought his position through, or at least that he was not able to escape from his preconceptions as to the relation of God with His creatures. He is on much safer ground when he deals with sin not as a matter of theology merely but of experience. His view

of it as the dominance of the sense-consciousness to the hindrance of the God-consciousness, as the victory of the lower nature over the higher, brings him, as we have seen, very near to modern views on the subject. But in his exposition of the subject he seems to be more concerned for the logical structure of his system than he is for the testimony of the Christian consciousness. Among the theologians who have dealt with this question Schleiermacher is by no means the only one to fall into this error. There is no department of religious thought in which so much may be gained by exchanging the purely philosophical for the experimental and psychological method as is the case with the doctrine of sin.

No teaching on this subject can be reckoned to be Christian which does not take account of the fact that sin is a voluntary affair. It has its seat in the will, and involves certain moral preferences. Thus it becomes a disposition which is something more than mere error. It is a positive though perverted self-affirmation, and is not to be described or thought of merely in negative terms. It follows, therefore, and this also is part of the Christian position, that sin involves guilt, and cannot, therefore, be described truly in terms which would make guilt either impossible or unreal. Thus while corruption may be shared, guilt cannot be. It must become a man's own by his own act, before it can be charged to him. In the same way sin is not mere

sensuousness or animalism, a recrudescence of the lower self; but rather the deliberate and conscious choice of the animal as over against the higher or spiritual motive or nature. The sin here lies not in the nature, or in the type of conduct in question, which *per se* may be altogether innocent, but in the selection of it against other possible courses of action. So also sin involves action which is the negation of love. It is in this sense that it is often denominated selfishness, though it is also something more. If love is the fulfilling of the law, then to that extent sin is both lovelessness and lawlessness. In the light of these considerations it will be seen that Schleiermacher's doctrine lacks something to make it a complete and satisfactory account of the Christian position.

CHAPTER VII

THE WORK OF CHRIST

SCHLEIERMACHER'S doctrine of the redemptive work of Christ is closely related to his theory of Christ's person on the one hand, and to his conception of human nature on the other. The peculiar worth of the person of Christ consists in His possession of an original and absolute God-consciousness. The fact that the God-consciousness in Him is supreme, and that it entirely controls all His energies, argues on His part a condition of sinlessness and blessedness, the attainment of which by men would mean their entire redemption. Men are capable of this in virtue of the fact of their original perfection. It means simply the restoration of a condition which they have forfeited through sin. It comes about by making them sharers in the God-consciousness which Christ possesses to so unique a degree. To us this is not merely an object of contemplation, but something in which we can have part, and it is the work of Christ to communicate it. The redemptive work of Christ is thus an act of self-communication, and may be studied either objectively from the point of view of His activity, or subjectively from the point of

view of the receptivity of the redeemed. This will give us on the one hand a doctrine of Redemption and Reconciliation, and on the other a doctrine of Christian communion or the Christian life. We have now to deal with each of these in turn.

1. *The doctrine of Redemption.*[1]

According to Schleiermacher the consciousness of redemption is produced in us by religious fellowship with Christ. Christ's personal perfection gives to fellowship with Him the power to awaken this faith. It constitutes for the believer a state of grace in which all his activities become the activities of Christ in him. It is through His working upon us, as we contemplate the picture of His life presented in the Scriptures, that we are roused to a conscious sense of need and led to accept the gift of God-consciousness which He has to bestow. Just as the personality of the Redeemer Himself is due to the creative act whereby God Himself is present in Him and becomes the source of all His activities, so the impartation to our nature of the activity of the Redeemer renews our being and creates within us a new personality. This position Schleiermacher supports from the various scripture references to the new man, a new creation and the like. This means for him that, though the renewed soul may still be conscious of sin and imperfection, these are regarded as alien to his

[1] For this Chapter, cf. *Glaubensleher*, 100–105.

true nature and as belonging only to his external relations. The condition thus produced is one of redemption. It is described as involving an actual liberation from sin, and a cancelling or abolishing of the sinful nature or state.

But the work described in these terms is not confined to, nor is it completed in individuals. Just as God's work in creation has to do with the world and with individuals only as they are related to the world order, so redemption is world-wide, and has human nature as a whole for its object. The field of the new principle of life is humanity, and the God-consciousness is propagated by bringing men into spiritual contact with the communion in which it operates. This communion is the Church, the new organism which Christ has formed for Himself. It is in and through the Church that men have experience not merely of the historical image of Christ, but of His redeeming power. There is a new life in the Church which spreads among all those who enter into touch with it, and the source of this new life is Christ. This view of redemption Schleiermacher characterizes as mystical, and distinguishes it, on the one hand, from the view which assigns to Christ a redeeming activity apart from the Church which he calls magical, and on the other from that which attributes everything to the example and doctrine of Christ, which he calls empirical. He claims that his own view is superior to either of these because it is verified

in experience. The work which Christ thus accomplishes in its initiation is to be regarded as supernatural, and in its manifestation, historical and natural.[1] Described in Schleiermacher's own words the position is as follows: "According to the law of the historical continuity of human nature, the higher perfection of the second Adam must act upon the like nature by stimulating and communicating, primarily in order by means of the difference to bring to perfection the consciousness of sinfulness, but also in order to take away infelicity by means of assimilation" (89, 2).

2. *The doctrine of Reconciliation.*

By reconciliation Schleiermacher understands the taking up of the believer into the peculiar condition of blessedness which Christ Himself enjoys. This implies, not as in the Pauline theology, a change of the will towards God, but rather a change in attitude towards the world and sin. Christ's own blessedness consists in freedom from the evils to which flesh is heir, and which limit the scope of our earthly life and activities. He found in these rather a means for the excitement of His higher powers. So, for the believer, communion with Christ implies a new relation to sin and evil. The old man is

[1] Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, 88, 4. "When regard is had to the Redeemer Himself, it is no miracle, but is the moral naturalization of the supernatural, for every distinct power draws masses to itself and holds them fast."

put away; sin is forgiven; and punishment is no longer feared. The forgiveness thus attained does not exclude experience of evil, but causes it no longer to be regarded as the punishment of sin. These results of the mystical apprehension of Christ and of communion with Him give us a greater assurance of blessedness than either the prevailing magical, or empirical view of His redemptive work.

It should be noted that Schleiermacher describes this work altogether from the subjective standpoint, and in so doing departs from the Church tradition which assigns an objective validity to the death and suffering of Christ as a means of reconciliation between God and man. He argues that we cannot give to the sufferings of Christ a primary function in the work of our salvation, because that would deprive men of a perfect acceptance into fellowship with Him prior to His death. In regard to reconciliation the condition of acceptance into Christ's blessedness depends on our consciousness of our unblessed state, and on the longing for better things which this arouses. But the perfection of the blessedness of Christ can only be made manifest as it shows itself superior to suffering, and especially to the suffering which results from opposition to sin. Christ's submission to suffering is really more important in this regard than His sufferings themselves. The constitution of the Person of Christ is the continuation in time of a creative

divine act in which we share. The attainment of this Divine life completes the original destiny of humanity and fulfils the highest possibilities of our nature. Thus to Schleiermacher the sufferings of Christ are not really essential to His work as Saviour, though they play their part in it. Their function is to show His utter devotion to the needs of men and to the work of the Kingdom of God, and to reveal the perfection of His blessedness through His endurance of the extreme consequences of His resistance to evil. In this way also His own fellow-feeling with sinful and suffering mankind is brought out. We shall see later how these ideas are further developed in connection with Schleiermacher's discussion of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. Meanwhile it may be noted again that his whole conception of reconciliation is his own, and is strictly conditioned by his subjective view of the work of redemption through Christ.[1] It is

[1] Ritschl criticizes his position very pertinently as follows : "What he calls reconciliation is *reconciliation with evil :* what he calls redemption ought in reason to have been called reconciliation with God. For the uplifting of the God-consciousness as a free act of the believer means, teleologically considered, that directing of the will towards the divine end whereby the sin which had previously prevailed is repressed. If, now, this operation of Christ be called redemption, it is not the primary but the secondary element of the process that is brought into prominence. But if in consideration of the chief matter this operation of Christ must be called reconciliation with God, then that abolition of the general consciousness of guilt which is included in

important to remember his peculiar use of these familiar terms in discussing his position.

Schleiermacher next proceeds to consider the redeeming work of Christ under the common divisions of prophetic, priestly and kingly activities. He accepts these as representing factors in the development of the idea of salvation both among Jews and Christians, and as contributing real elements in the relation of Christ both to God and men.

The prophetic office of Christ consists of teaching, prophecy and miracle, just as in the case of the Old Testament prophets. With Him, however, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God was both doctrine and prophecy, and the coming of the Kingdom began with its preaching. This constituted an original revelation of God to

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this might suitably have been called redemption if it was to be brought into prominence as a characteristic feature. For the removal of actual sin is to be counted on only in a relative measure, even when the general direction of the will seeks the Divine end: on the other hand, with it the reversal of the judgment regarding evil, and therefore redemption from its pressure as the prevailing mode of feeling, must not merely be connected with a will so directed, but also must admit of being firmly held. If thus it seems permissible to correct in this fashion Schleiermacher's unfamiliar use of language, in order to make his meaning more intelligible, that meaning amounts to the following: that Christ, having in the abiding powerfulness of His God-consciousness given the Being of God in Him to be plainly seen, elicits the like direction of the consciousness towards God in the individuals who surrender themselves to Him." *Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. Trans.), p. 474.

and through Him, and one that was independent of Judaism. In it His own self-manifestation was embodied. It included the doctrine of His person, in its external aspect as the imparting of eternal life through the God-consciousness, and in its internal aspect as the revelation of the Father through Himself. His teaching thus culminates in the setting forth of His own person as the unique revelation of God. Through this revelation Christ becomes the climax and end of all prophecy, because the message thus given is all-sufficient and inexhaustible. This prophetic doctrine, further, looks forward to the consummation of the Kingdom, and this too is given in Him. Thus His prophetic work is one and all-embracing, showing the gradual unfolding of God's will and purposes in history and in the life of the world.

The miracles of Jesus, Schleiermacher argues, possessed a value for those before whose eyes they were wrought, as exhibitions of His Person and character. They have no longer the same validity for us because we are separated from them and belong to a different age. To-day they have passed out of the range of dogmatics and are become subjects for scientific investigation. Their place is taken by the knowledge we possess of the spiritual activities of Christ, which resemble them in quality and range. All other miracles are contained and summed up in the one great miracle of His appearance in the world. We may reckon the miracles as part of His

prophetic activity, because they too serve to set forth the Being of God in Him. This position, however, Schleiermacher further qualifies by quoting Luther's words: "Es könnten auch noch heutiges Tages diesselben Zeichen, welche die Apostel thaten, billig geschehen, wenn es von Nöthen wäre."

The work of Christ as Priest. The High-priestly office of Christ comprises His perfect fulfilment of the Law or active obedience, and His atoning death or passive obedience, and the representation of believers before the Father. Though it is set forth in the forms of the ancient covenant, there are certain contrasts between this office and that of the Jewish High Priest. To a certain extent His active obedience as self-revelational belongs to the prophetic office, while His intercession is among the functions of His kingly office. His High-priestly work, however, involves a communion with Him on our part which enables us to share His perfection, and imparts to us His holy will in motive if not in actual fact. This oneness with Him is acknowledged by God in His estimate of us and is credited to our faith. It is in this sense that His righteousness is reckoned to us, and we become the objects of God's good-will through our union with Him. In no other way does He fulfil the law or do the will of God on our behalf. "In living fellowship with Christ, no one will be, or will be considered by God, anything for himself:

but every one will appear only as inspired by Him, and as a portion, in the process of development, of His work." He thus fulfils the will of God not instead of us but for our benefit.

In His passive obedience Christ suffers for our sins not in bearing the punishment of them, but because through them He is brought into contact with evil and misery. By our union with Him the connection between sin and evil ceases for us, and thus we are redeemed from punishment. It is by entering into the sufferings of Christ that we attain the conviction of His holiness and blessedness. His suffering is vicarious in that His sympathy with sin is complete even as regards those who have no consciousness of it, and in that being sinless Himself there is no obligation on Him to suffer. His relation to men makes Him representative of the race. Our proper penitence for sin finds its pattern and power in His sympathetic consciousness of its evil. God, then, sees us in Christ as sharers in His obedience, and we see God in Him because of the eternal love which sent Him forth.[1]

[1] On this Ritschl notes : " The result of this investigation may be stated thus, that Schleiermacher in general follows Abelard in seeking to understand the saving influence of Christ as proceeding exclusively from God to men, and so has failed to appropriate that element of dogmatic tradition which, after Anselm, gives expression at the same time, in one or another shape, to a reciprocal effect wrought by Christ on God. For what in this respect he almost under compulsion concedes, viz. that God in view of Christ's

We must therefore abandon that view of the death of Christ which finds its efficacy in our contemplation of His sufferings in detail, because it is destructive of the idea of His priesthood and annuls His activity. So also must we abandon the idea that in His death He bore punishment in such a way as to satisfy the Divine righteousness. We must not make God the arbitrary author of His sufferings. So far as Christ is our representative and we are under the necessity of exhibiting His life in ourselves, His work, though satisfying to God, is not strictly vicarious. And so far as He represents us in feeling the sinfulness of our sin, He does not offer satisfaction because those who are not yet in communion with Him must feel their own lack of blessedness before they can be brought into this communion. But He satisfies God and represents us in so far as the worth of His redemptive activity sets forth human nature in its perfection. In the God-consciousness of the Christian communion we have His co-operation, and in this way through Him the prayers of Christians become acceptable before God.

Thus Christ is both the end and perfection of all priesthood, because He is a perfect mediator

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perfectness accepts with complacency the men who are united with Christ, Abelard also has expressed in a slightly modified way, in saying that the merit and intercession of Christ make up for the imperfection of our love in the Divine judgment."—*Op. cit.*, p. 483.

between God and man, and because in Him the significance of the priestly office is exhausted. In Him the communion of believers stands towards the rest of humanity just as did the Jewish priesthood towards the people. As their acceptance with God was brought about by participation in the official acts of the High Priest, so the active obedience of Christ has the significance of satisfaction for us. This does away once and for all with all special priesthoods and with the meritoriousness of individual actions or sufferings.

In a note appended to this section, Schleiermacher deals with the ideas of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. His argument is summarized as follows by Cross : [1] " These expressions must be excluded from a doctrinal statement of Christ's person and work, since the conditions so designated have no bearing on His person in itself or on His work in itself, or on the relation of His person to His work. The supposition of an earlier condition of Christ's which was higher than His earthly, or of a later higher condition, is inconsistent with the unity of His person and militates against faith in His person as He was manifested on earth. It implies also impossible changes in the Divine nature, as that to the absolutely extreme and eternal, and therefore self-identical, a humiliation may be ascribed : or self-contradictory conceptions of

[1] *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, p. 226.

the relations of the Divine and human in Him, as that the attributes of one or other are alternately subject to limitation or quiescence. It is contradicted by Christ's own statements concerning His own relations to the Father while on earth, which do not regard His sitting at God's right hand as an exaltation (cf. John i. 51; iv. 34; v. 17, 20 ff.; vi. 37; viii. 29; x. 30, 36). The idea has arisen from Phil. ii. 6–9, a rhetorical passage of an ascetical character, which has been interpreted didactically. The whole doctrine destroys the unity of Christ's person and the reality of His earthly life, and is fatal to faith in His redemption."

The kingly office of Christ consists in this, that He is the source of everything which pertains to the well-being of the communion of believers. It only refers to individuals as members of this communion. It is in Him that the Kingdom of God begins and is maintained. He is its animating principle, it is through connection with Him that men enter it, and in it His will is supreme. Its laws are derived from His personal consciousness and therefore are eternal.

As regards the difficulty of relating this kingdom to the universal rule of God, Schleiermacher insists that it is purely theoretical. Christ cannot be said to have any share in God's rule over the natural world, because this would be inconsistent with His prayers, and to assume anything of the kind would take us beyond the

sphere of faith. Christ's power is exercised freely within the communion founded by Him and is, so far, infinite. It is through this communion that His power is manifested in the form of redeeming activity upon the world outside. He thus becomes the climax and end of all spiritual authority. All others exercise their authority in a limited and subordinate way. Only with Him is it perfect. This differentiates His Kingdom from all earthly powers and material methods. By the purely spiritual character of His God-consciousness He exercises a purely spiritual rule, and thus under Him the Church is separated from the State and from all material authorities. The more complete this separation the more harmoniously will the two kinds of power co-exist.

It must be admitted that the distinction which Schleiermacher draws between the various offices of Christ is not very thoroughly worked out, nor is it possible, on his showing, very clearly to separate the various functions involved. Ritschl's criticism is here again quite pertinent :[1] "The Kingship or pastoral office of Christ relates to the sphere of supersensuous truth, that is, to the sphere which it is the vocation of a perfect prophet to direct. The Kingly and prophetical offices thus coincide in Christ, for the *regnum potentiae et gloriae* cannot be regarded as *officium*. The Kingly or pastoral office, again, has its

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 476.

highest function or task in self-sacrifice for those who are its subjects (John x. 15), and thus includes in itself the character which is expressed by the priestly office. For the general idea of that Divine service which the priest discharges on behalf of the people belongs to the King also, and is by Christ applied to His own offering up of His life under this attribute; while He Himself never assumes the name of priest. The three titles thus do not exclude but include one another, and the whole series of Christ's activities in discharge of His vocation can be developed from His title of Prophet as clearly and completely as from that of King."

This description of the offices of Christ brings to a close Schleiermacher's analysis of His redeeming activity. Taken as a whole it may be said to be a coherent and historical re-statement of the Evangelical position, though it leads to far other than the ordinary Evangelical conclusions. The most frequent and obvious criticism of it is concerned with its purely subjective character. From this point of view the position has been summed up by one of the most recent writers on the subject as follows: [1] "Schleiermacher repudiated the doctrines of expiatory suffering and of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, and held that the redemptive value of Christ lay, not primarily in His death,

[1] G. B. Stevens, *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 222.

but in the power and effect of His consciousness of God, into participation in which we are admitted by faith and in which we find joy and peace. Christ, indeed, suffered for us in virtue of His unique union with us. Implicated as He was in the drama of our sinful life, He could not but encounter and endure the evils consequent on sin which He had Himself in no way personally deserved. As the perfect man, the representative and recapitulation of our humanity, He suffered with and for us the consequences of our sins, and thus in and by Him humanity atoned for its sin. But this work of Christ was not a propitiation of God, but the means whereby the human conscience makes a subjective expiation by dying to sin and attaining a new life in Christ." Such a statement as this, however, needs to be supplemented by what Schleiermacher says of the process of redemption in dealing with it from the point of view of the conversion and justification of the individual. We have yet to deal with this in detail, but, meanwhile, it may be pointed out that in presenting that aspect of the subject he treats it from a more objective standpoint. For example:[1] "Justification presupposes something in consideration of which one is justified: and as in the Supreme Being no error is possible, it is assumed that something has occurred to the man between his past and his present, whereby the previous displeasure of God is taken away

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 117, 2.

and without which he could not be an object of the Divine complacency." This "something" must, no doubt, be taken to be the *opus operatum* of the redemptive work of Christ to which Schleiermacher certainly assigns an objective value of its own, though not apart from the effect it produces in the consciousness and life of the believer. It is true that Schleiermacher does not isolate the death and sufferings of Christ and regard them alone as active in the work of salvation. They are but the crown and consummation of His whole life of obedience, and help to constitute the perfection of His union both with God and man.

The chief defects of Schleiermacher's doctrine from the standpoint of orthodox theology are, his failure to give proper weight to the justice of God in relation to the work of redemption, and his refusal to allow the action of Christ any influence upon God and upon His attitude to men. These both follow quite naturally upon a doctrine of God which emphasizes His omnipotence at the expense of other attributes, and interprets Him in terms rather of influence than of personality. The real advance which Schleiermacher made is seen in the failure of the polemic against him carried on by men like Philippi and Thomasius, who merely repeat the ecclesiastical doctrine in a rigid form without attempting to solve the difficulties in it of which Schleiermacher was only too conscious. His

doctrine mediated through Ritschl and others, has become exceedingly fruitful for modern times, mainly because he avoided the magical interpretations of the work of Christ which have been so common, and made the faith of the believer an essential factor in perfecting the work of redemption. In his general presentation of the work of Christ, Schleiermacher tries to steer between Rationalism on the one hand and a crude supernaturalism on the other. In describing the High-priestly function of Christ as due to His sympathy and as working through His communion with men he gives, as Dorner points out, life and movement to a doctrine which in its usually accepted form, was rigid and dead. He humanized and moralized the work of redemption in an entirely healthy way, and the whole theology of the subject has been broadened and vivified by his treatment.

In his reaction against the stiffness of current dogma, Schleiermacher fails to take due account of the Scriptural data for a doctrine of Redemption, and this again partly explains the tentative and rudimentary character of his contribution to the subject. His conception of sin is inadequate because he fails to do justice to the freedom of man on the one hand, and to the idea of the righteousness of God on the other. Nor, again, does he give to the love of God its due weight as the regulative principle in all His dealings with sinful men. While every allow-

ance must be made for the natural inadequacy of all human speculation on this great subject, it may be urged with some show of reason that the work of redemption is in its highest expression, but the effort of the Divine love to overcome the situation created by the sin of man. It is not an appeal of love to man, but an act of love for man. If we are to substitute, as Schleiermacher desiderates, a personal and moral view of redemption for one merely legal and judicial, this can only be as we regard it as the expression and outcome of the very nature of God. It is God's Fatherhood, and the holy love for men which this involves, that is regulative both of His aims and actions in their salvation.

The occasion for this action is found in the sin of man, and an inadequate view of sin eviscerates atonement of all real content. Here it is necessary to supplement Schleiermacher's conception with those more recent views of sin which read it in terms of the will and see in it a determination of the self along a lower line when a higher is recognised as both possible and right. From the point of view of religion this means the setting of the self over against God, and involves the necessity of a reconciliation between the two. Apart from this necessity and its full realization by the sinner, the work of atonement is no more than an empty demonstration. The mystical conception on which Schleiermacher bases his theory is good and

right so far as it insists on the relation of the matter to the experience and consciousness of the believer. But the need for union with Christ can only come about through a vivid consciousness of disunion. Apart from this there is no *raison d'être* for the work which He does. It is the sense of sin which drives men to seek deliverance in some power outside themselves. The sense of sin is keenest in those who have a high ideal of holiness. And it is the work of Christ at once to awaken the need and to satisfy it.

Schleiermacher rightly contends that the object of Christ's work is to draw us into the communion of His holiness and blessedness, or in other words into that relation with God which He Himself enjoys. But no psychology of this experience is complete that does not take account of the fact that the great barrier between us and a true relation with God is sin. Forgiveness of the sinner only intensifies the sense of his sin. The soul cannot attain a true and restful relation with God until sin is, in the language of Scripture, annulled or done away. This is the difference between our forgiveness and God's. We forgive the sinner, in the sense of restoring him to the old relations which had been interrupted by sin; He alone can forgive the sin and make it as though it had not been, in our eyes as well as in His own. That He does this in and through Jesus Christ is sometimes

described as the fact of the Atonement, but the relevance of the fact is only discoverable by those who need it and who are conscious of their need.

But here arises the question as to the part played by the death of Christ in all this. In what sense is it a demonstration of the love of God? How does it affect His forgiveness? Is it any more than a sympathetic demonstration of the evil of sin? If His whole life, as Schleiermacher suggests, was a suffering for the sin of man, in what way does this, not merely draw men into communion with Him, but help them to be rid of sin and restore them to the holiness of God? All these questions, again, can only be answered through a deeper conception of the meaning of God's forgiveness than that which Schleiermacher entertains. The greater a man's sense of the love and mercy of God, the deeper is his consciousness of sin, and his feeling of impotence in the presence of it. What he needs is that his sin be taken away and he himself set free from its bondage and started on a new course of holiness. It is not merely that he wishes to escape punishment, he wishes to escape from sin. Now it is this liberation from sin which the experience of the Christian Church has found in Jesus Christ. Men have learnt to say, "In Him we have the forgiveness of our sins." Analysis of this experience points to something vicarious in the work of Jesus Christ. What God has done in

Him seems to meet their moral need, and supply that which they were unable to do for themselves. It is God's confessed relation to men in Jesus Christ which justifies His action. Men will suffer on the part of those who love them a self-sacrifice which they could never accept or justify in the case of a stranger, and the love of God in Christ is not only manifested in His sacrifice but justifies it. Being who He is they can accept His action on their behalf, and in their experience it becomes the moral Katharsis which they need, and opens up to them the power of an endless life. As Schleiermacher points out, this work of God in Christ is not complete apart from the faith of those on whose behalf it is accomplished. But its appeal to faith is constituted by the fact that it is not a mere demonstration of love, but an active interference of love in their interests. It thus not only deals with the past but gives assurance as to the future, as every valid conception of forgiveness requires. For those on whom and for whom He works this redemption Christ becomes the power of a new life. In his exposition of justification, Schleiermacher, as we shall see comes very near to this position, though he states it rather from the side of God's estimate of man, than from that of man's moral action and worth.

In any modern statement of it the work of Christ must be brought into line with what may be called the developmental doctrine of human

nature. This sees man undergoing a process the end of which doth not yet appear. But it is at all points more teleological than Schleiermacher is disposed to allow. At the same time it recognizes the ethical unity of God's nature in a love of which law and forgiveness are equally legitimate expressions, and which works, as it has worked from eternity to help man in his struggle upwards. The new life which is realized in Jesus Christ is the positive of the process which negatively is called forgiveness. If sin means that the individual is a mass of survivals from a lower past which is always tending to reassert itself, then forgiveness is best expressed as an emancipation of the spiritual life rather than as a removal of sentences or penalties. Atonement thus becomes dynamic in the renewal of the personality, and the work of Jesus Christ embodies at once the new revelation which occasions and the power which makes possible the necessary change. As has already been suggested Schleiermacher's interpretation of the work of Christ may be allowed to fill out the content of his doctrine of the Person of Christ. What he says as to the effect which the work of Christ produces on the life of the believer is really more to the point than any discussion on formal theological lines of the offices which Christ holds. The language which Schleiermacher uses in regard to the union between the Christian and Christ is altogether Pauline, but he fails to

describe the union in any but purely mystical terms. At the same time he is so far influenced by Protestant theology as to make it one of the objects of this union to win for men the favour of God. God can take pleasure in those whose lives are hid with Christ in Him. Both justification and conversion according to Schleiermacher are the beginning of the new life in Christ. How all this is related to the sufferings of Christ, and to what extent it is brought about by them Schleiermacher does not tell us. Christ's sufferings belong to the process of becoming conformed to the Divine will, and they warrant, therefore, the sufferings which His followers are called on to undergo. But beyond that they seem to have little further meaning and no higher function to fulfil. The defect is due largely to the fact that the emphasis in regard to the work of Jesus Christ is theological rather than moral.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

THE subjects to be treated in this chapter form the second division of Schleiermacher's doctrine of Redemption. They mostly refer to the more individual and experimental side of the work of Jesus Christ, or, as Schleiermacher puts it, to the mode in which communion with the perfection and blessedness of the Redeemer is expressed in the individual soul. It would be natural to contrast this with his previous exposition of the doctrine as giving its more subjective aspect, and there can be no doubt that such a distinction was present to Schleiermacher's own mind, however little it may be obvious to some of his critics. The point that is most open to remark, however, is his inclusion of justification as well as conversion and sanctification among the more personal and individual aspects of the work of salvation. This involves a division of the subject which is decidedly awkward, and, quite apart from the question of form, seems to show that the usual distinctions between the objective and subjective in the redeeming work of Christ had for Schleiermacher very little meaning.

The section[1] begins with a discussion of regeneration and sanctification as expressed in the individual self-consciousness through entering into a life communion with Christ. Schleiermacher relates the self-consciousness of the individual to the race-consciousness from which the consciousness of sin is inseparable. It is the collective sinful life which is expressed as guilty in the soul of the individual. Prior to his attaining to communion with Christ the individual has the God-consciousness only intermittently, and in its repression discovers the evil of the influences which work in that direction. The relation of the individual activities to the God-consciousness is changed by the work of Christ, and communion with Him now becomes the controlling force in the personal life. This works a change in the individual self-consciousness, by connecting it with the new collective life originating in the God-consciousness of Jesus. The man becomes a new personality with a new life now in process of development. He has experienced a change, which is regeneration; and he has started on a new career, that of sanctification.

In all this, however, regard must be had to the fact that the individual does not stand alone, but is always to be treated as in relation to the whole human race. So also with the work of Jesus Christ. His coming into existence is the begin-

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 106–112.

ning of a new humanity. He is the potentiality of the regeneration of mankind, and His work is perfected in their sanctification. The development from the human to the divine consciousness, which went on in Him perfectly and uninterruptedly, goes on in the race through Him; but not in the same smooth manner, because of the elements of sinfulness which remain over in us from the old state. The regeneration of the race shows itself in the regeneration of individuals, and that within the communion of believers which is the medium for the operation of all those forces which make for sanctification.

So Schleiermacher connects the process of regeneration altogether with the communion of believers with Christ. It is reception into this communion which gives a man a new relation to God and one that is based on something more positive than a consciousness of guilt.[1] It

[1] Cf. Herrmann, *Communion with God*, p. 54. "The knowledge of God and the religion which have been and which are possible to men placed in other historical conditions are impossible to us. Indeed, there exists in our case a hindrance to the religious life of which men were quite ignorant in olden times, namely, that deepening of the moral consciousness which has come about, and the consequent moral need. We feel ourselves to be separated from God, and consequently that our faith is paralysed by matters which troubled the ancients very little. We cannot go back to simple indifference to a moral demand after our conscience has once been awakened to it. Hence we need a different revelation of God from that which was given to the ancients. We can only become certain of a God who forgives our sins

means a definite change of life and a new direction of the will which is henceforth determined by the power of the God-consciousness rather than by the sensuous impulses. The first of these aspects of regeneration, namely, the new relation to God, Schleiermacher calls Justification, while the second, the new life, he describes as Conversion. Both, however, are involved in the participation in Christ's blessedness and they are not to be separated.

Conversion begins in repentance and issues in faith. In both of them we see the effects of Christ's activity whether as self-revealing (*i.e.* prophetic) or self-communicating (*i.e.* kingly). Repentance is a reaction against the past life as a whole, and not merely against certain individual sinful actions, and a change of feeling as to the aim and direction of life. As subjection to a new set of energies it involves faith. Faith is a receptive and teleological act—not a passive condition. It lays hold of the Redeemer as He is set forth in the Christian communion. Though salvation is the work of the grace of God, this grace has to be received and in the receiving of it the human nature is active. But from the grace which brings men into communion with

and turns our moral impotence into moral strength. This is what is vouchsafed to us in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He gives a fullness to our personal life which makes all other forms of religion useless, and which allows us to find rest alone in that communion with God into which He brings us."

Christ we have to go back to a prevenient grace which has dictated the original constitution of our nature and is manifest in fitful desires after redemption. This was divinely imparted to our humanity at creation and had in view the fuller redemption to be wrought in and by Jesus Christ. There is thus a resemblance between the divine redemption of humanity realized in individuals and the divine act whereby the God-consciousness became focused in the being of Jesus Christ. Though a man may have a share in his own conversion he still remains dependent on the divine grace.

Schleiermacher goes on to illustrate the point by reference to the controversy as to the relation of the children of Christian parents to the Church into which they are born. He rejects the view that such children are to be regarded on baptism as members of the Church. Whether children are born in the Church or not they are still subject to evil influences, and may grow up into sin. Baptism does not affect their liability to sin. They are still in need of conversion. It may, however, be said that those born within the Church stand in a more favourable relation to the operations of divine grace and are the proper objects of the gospel message, while the relation of others to the gospel is more precarious. As to baptism, Schleiermacher contends that the creeds only contemplate it in the case of adults and those who desire it on

conversion. It may be extended to children only on the supposition stated by Calvin, that these contain within them the seeds or promise of repentance and faith. The connection of baptism with the new birth is to be condemned as magical. As in the early days of Christianity, faith and repentance are to be brought about by the direct influence of the prophetic activity of Christ, or mediated through those who are His messengers.

Schleiermacher further contends that it is necessary to maintain the connection between our consciousness of redemption through Christ and the historical person of the Redeemer, *i. e.* in modern familiar language, between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history. We must not be content with saying that Christ is immediately revealed to the soul apart from and without the word, for this would make redemption depend on the bare idea or imagination of the Redeemer, and would seem to render any historical appearance unnecessary. We must keep our experience of salvation in close touch with the historical Saviour. This will mean that from the first awakening of the soul to the completion of the process of saving faith in sanctification the activity of Christ is all-powerful. These are all normal operations of the divine grace, and are supernatural in character since they are not due to human instrumentality alone, though, as we have seen, the human will has an important

part to play in them. On the other hand they are natural in their operation, because they depend on apprehension of and communion with the historical Jesus, of whose life they form a kind of perpetuation.[1]

This brings us to the process of justification, by which we mean that God forgives the sins of the converted man and acknowledges him as His child. But this change in the relation of the man to God is only the consequence of his true belief in the Redeemer. Thus we cannot separate the act of God in justifying the sinner from the work of Christ in converting him. Forgiveness of sins by itself is not sufficient as an expression of the new life. It involves also the new relation to God of which we have spoken, and which supplies the positive element in salvation. As forgiveness stands in relation to repentance so does justification to faith. Repentance finds its issue in the forgiveness of sins, and faith in the consciousness of sonship to God through fellowship with Jesus Christ. Repentance declares the end of the old state and the death of the old man, and faith heralds the beginning of the new. Both alike are due to the action of Jesus Christ, and find their outcome in the new relation to God. As Schleier-

[1] Cf. *Glaubenslehre*, 108, 5. "Whereby it is perfectly consonant with truth when to the consciousness of man in the process of conversion all mediate influence of man vanishes, Christ being immediately present in His activity."

macher says:[1] "Justification presupposes something in consideration of which sin is justified; and as in the Supreme Being no error is possible, it is assumed that something has occurred to the man between his past and his present, whereby the previous displeasure of God is taken away, and without which he could not be an object of the divine complacency." Regarded in this light justification takes place at the same time as conversion. Together they constitute the state of the new man. "Thus in the new man sin no longer operates: it is only the after-effect or remaining influence of the old man. The new man accordingly no longer regards sin as belonging to himself, and also works against it as against something foreign to him, whereby the consciousness of guilt is taken away."[2] Thus the consciousness of sin is changed in the new man through faith to the consciousness of forgiveness.

We must not, however, regard justification as a single isolated act or judgment depending on a single event or transaction. To do so would be to make God's action merely temporal and contingent and would mar our feeling of absolute dependence. Justification is the result of God's eternal and universal decree, which includes the sending of Jesus Christ and the effects which are to follow from His coming and have always been contemplated in the divine

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, 107, 2. [2] Ibid., 109, 2.

purpose. The ultimate perfecting of the human race in Christ is part of this purpose in creation. Since God does not will without acting, the aim of justification, which is to readjust man's relation to the divine, is carried out in all God's work through Jesus Christ. His Incarnation and the ends to be accomplished by it are all part of the eternal purpose of God.

In the communion of life with Christ the natural powers of the regenerate are taken up into His perfection and blessedness. This condition is called one of sanctification. It is connected with the idea of holiness, and with the use of that term in the Old Testament, as an attribute of God and of things dedicated to the use and service of God. But in speaking of Christians it is better to use the term sanctification than holiness because it speaks of a process. They have not reached a final state, but are in a transition between the moment of regeneration and complete assimilation to Christ. The state of sanctification is analogous to the state in which man came under the prevenient grace of God, rather than to the state in which he was dominated by the consciousness of sin. Prevenient grace influences men by prompting them to repentance and faith, and to actions which tend to set up the habit of holiness. While these actions do not arise out of individual regeneration they may be regarded as due to the collective influence of the Church, in which Christians may be said to exercise on

others an influence like that of the natives in a city over foreigners. The state of regeneration may be distinguished from the new birth itself by the fact that the will to escape from the former sinful condition has become a power shown in the repulsion of sin. It is to this direction of the will that we have to look as characteristic rather than to any action or series of actions. The power in question comes from submission to Christ and from the steadfast desire to be influenced by Him. In the new collective life in which the regenerate man has fellowship with Christ his natural powers are appropriated by Christ's activity and no longer remain under the dominion of the life of sin. The affinity to Christ thus produced works out in a gradual religious development in each member of the body.

This development can only be gradual. The new life is the scene of a continual opposition between the God-consciousness and the sin-consciousness. The latter will gradually disappear, though it will still become manifest in sinful actions, from time to time. These are the inevitable results of the conflict and they will temporarily obscure the effect of the working of the higher principle. This is strictly analogous to the former condition in which the action of prevenient grace would sometimes obscure the effects of the lower nature. It is in this respect that there is a difference between the develop-

ment of Christ and that of the regenerate. But the tendency of the sin-consciousness to recur does not annul the union of the life of the believer with Christ. Nor does it undo regeneration as the act of union between the human and the divine, or sanctification as the state of union.

Schleiermacher further elaborates his argument by asserting that in the activities of the regenerate we are to distinguish between the permanent factor in the shape of the ever-renewed and Christ-directed will, and the variable factors represented by isolated acts of sin due to the resurgence of the old nature. The former belongs to the kingdom of God and the latter lie outside it.

It must not be supposed, however, that the sins of the regenerate can destroy the state of grace in which he lives, or hinder the work of grace in his heart. His condition is always one of conflict. But the conflict calls forth within him the action of the higher nature and is so far good. Sinful impulses within the man are not, as it were, due to a fresh outburst of sin, but are the echo of the old life, and the recrudescence of old and outworn tendencies. They are always in the regenerate, accompanied by a sense of forgiveness, because they at once arouse the consciousness of and revolt from sin which are proper to his renewed state. The man's whole being is subject to the action of the divine grace and the consciousness of justification before God

is more potent in his experience than the consciousness of sin. This is indicated by the fact that the conflict within him is at all times real. The good deeds of the regenerate on the other hand, spring from his faith, though they again are not without opposition from the remaining sinful impulses of his nature. In spite of this, however, they are the objects of the divine complacency because they spring from the new collective life with which he is now identified. In other words the good deeds of the regenerate are the result of his union with Christ and the merit of them is not strictly his but Christ's. Thus his justification consists in the fact that God sees and judges him not as he is in himself, but as he is in Christ. He claims no personal merit or reward for what he does, it is Christ in him.

In order to complete this description of the state and life of the Christian we must add to it what Schleiermacher says about election and the communication of the Holy Spirit. In the *Glaubenslehre* [1] he deals with these subjects under the heading of the Christian Church though they really belong to the section we have just sketched. He regards the Church, or fellowship of believers, as the sphere of all Christian activities, and even when he is dealing most directly with the individual he never views him in isolation or apart from his place in the Christian community. We shall, therefore, be doing no violence to his

[1] Sections 116–120.

general conception of the subject if we group together all his references to the conditions and prospects of the new life. As we have already had reason to see they all come within the influence of the Christian community.

We deal with election first. Schleiermacher relates the consciousness of redemption in Christ for the individual with his race-consciousness. The work of Christ is potentially a work for the whole human race. The knowledge of it is spread gradually from the individual to the multitude, from nation to nation, from age to age; and always under the laws which govern the general development and activity of mankind. This is so in spite of the fact that the message is accepted by some and rejected by others. The supernatural message in Christ is made known to and through the Church under the laws which govern natural historical phenomena. As the final ground of the divine government of the world is the divine good-will, this needs to be defined and to be related in an intelligible manner to the phenomena indicated. It cannot be objected to that some should be received into the benefits of the divine grace earlier than others. But the fact that some are never so received at all, but die before they can have that privilege, creates a discord in the Christian view of the world. It seems not only to break the unity of the race, but to introduce something arbitrary into the operation of the divine will.

We must, therefore, regard the antithesis between the Church as the sphere of the operations of grace, and the world, as representing those outside, as only temporary and not in any sense final. It will ultimately disappear by the absorption of all men into the Church. Just as the process of sanctification in the individual is gradual and will only ultimately be perfected, so with mankind. The action of divine grace gradually permeating all society follows this course inevitably.

The first consequence of this is seen in the idea of fore-ordination. This means that the condition of those who have found the divine grace is the work of that grace. The individual enters into the kingdom as the result of a world plan and determining grace of God. The kingdom established by the Son is under the Father's guidance. This determination or fore-ordination includes all men. The unity of the race-consciousness and the universality of the world-order can only be harmonized with the work of redemption on the assumption that ultimately it will embrace all mankind.

From this we can go on to estimate the various determining grounds of election. The relation of the individual to the world-order will lead us to discover these grounds in the divine good-will, if we regard the career of the individual from the beginning; but in the divine fore-knowledge if we regard it from the point of view of the end

or purpose which his election serves. These are merely the same grounds viewed from different standpoints. The election of the individual depends on the fact that his faith is foreseen, and this again is determined by the divine causality operating through the divine purpose of good for the world as a whole. Schleiermacher, in a note on the paragraph dealing with election, states further that we must believe that the divine fore-ordination to salvation will embrace ultimately all mankind. Only on such an assumption can we form any satisfactory idea of the divine good pleasure and its operation in history.

The Communication of the Spirit.—Union with God in Christ is characteristic of all those who are in the condition of sanctification. The sphere of this union is the Church, and the indwelling of the divine in the Church is conditioned by the indwelling of the divine in Christ. The common spirit of the Christian communion Schleiermacher calls the will of the kingdom of God. It is this which gives the unity of the life of the Christian community and makes its members moral persons. Their common spirit impels them to all the actions characteristic of members of a Church. The communication of the Holy Spirit is thus simply the bestowal of the Divine Spirit upon the Church by Christ, and the Holy Spirit may be described as the common spirit of those who are sanctified. By the possession of this spirit they become a unity.

Schleiermacher supports this contention by urging that, in the New Testament, the Spirit is not the endowment of individuals as such, but is the possession of the Church and of individuals only as members of the Church. Just as those who constitute a nation have a certain unity amid variety, so in the Church there is a unity of spirit compatible with various types of activity. In the same way it is only through this unifying Spirit of God that real racial unity can be attained. Apart from this, racial unity is broken up by animosities of many kinds. Only in Christ, *i. e.* through the Spirit of Christ in them, are men one in love and service. And this shows us that the Spirit of God in man is not a natural principle but a supernatural endowment—a gift of God in Christ. The believer receives this gift from Christ, but not personally as did the first disciples. It comes to him through the communication of preaching. It was only when Christ left the disciples that His Spirit possessed them as their common spirit. When they became conscious of this they were changed from a school into a Church. As such they had the power of communicating the Spirit to those who were in the same condition as they had been in the days of their probation and preparation. Men who like them have received Christ by faith, and are no longer passive but active disciples, are said to have received the Holy Spirit. So the life and activity of the whole

Church depends historically on Christ. It is not imparted from Him in some magical way, but comes through the union of the divine with the human nature—a naturalization of the supernatural. So in believers the Holy Spirit becomes one with their human nature and is an actual and living force working in them. The life of the Church and its expression are closely analogous to the life of the Redeemer, because in both there is the same union of human nature with a divine principle. This, however, is only true of the human race as a whole as we view it teleologically, *i. e.* as destined to ultimate perfection and to the fulfilment of the ends for which the Christian Church exists.

The account thus given of the work of salvation in the human soul, of the state and status of the Christian believer, is an exceedingly interesting one. While Schleiermacher uses the terms of current ecclesiastical thought, he uses them freely, and seeks to interpret them always in the light of the Christian consciousness. In connecting conversion, forgiveness of sins, and justification as he does, Schleiermacher in the main follows the line of the Protestant tradition. But his position is his own in so far as he makes justification depend on the change in the believer's attitude to sin and to God rather than on the direct action of the love of God.

At the same time it must be admitted that nowhere are the defects of his qualities more

apparent than in his general treatment of the subject of salvation. In spite of his insistence on the importance of the Christian consciousness, he still inclines to deal with the subject from the point of view of theology rather than of experience. His doctrine thus tends to become artificial and even mechanical, as witness the relation maintained between justification and the divine decrees, and the fact that the individual Christian is always dealt with as a member of the community. There is no part of Schleiermacher's system which more strongly brings out and illustrates the need to deliver dogmatic theology from bondage to technicalities and to the definitions of the past. This is well illustrated by Ritschl in the description which he gives of the connections and consequences of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification.[1]

"In the first place he can appeal to the fact that the divine act of justification stands related to the receptivity of faith: it therefore cannot be thought of as independent of Christ's activity in conversion. This is held also by the old Lutheran school, which makes the *donatio fidei* to precede justification. But he diverges from the old school when he declares, in the second place, that justification cannot be conceived as an act distinct in point of time in its reference to individuals as such: but only as an individual operation in time of one divine act and decree.

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 491.

For, following out the general idea of God that he upholds, he affirms that there is only one eternal and general decree of the justification of men for Christ's sake, which is identical with that of the sending of Christ, and indeed, with that of the creation of the human race, inasmuch as in Christ alone is human nature perfected. From Christ onwards the proclamation in time of this divine act has continued without interruption, yet in its efficacy appears, in an isolated way, in the union of individual men with Christ. So that justification, as a single act of God, presents itself only in the self-consciousness of him who is apprehended of Christ."

Such a statement as this illustrates both the strength and the weakness of the type of theology represented by Schleiermacher and Ritschl. While neither of these writers would hold themselves bound in any way by the thought of the Church they cannot escape from the forms in which that thought has been commonly expressed. God becomes an influence or expression rather than a person. He is interpreted wholly in the light of His attributes, and these are regarded as fixed and known, so that their action can, as it were, be calculated. So the justification of the believer in God's sight becomes too much of an artificial process, resting on preconceived ideas as to what God ought to require rather than on the deep moral necessities of the case. The personal relation of the believer with God in

Christ is obscured, and the tendency is to substitute for it something official and therefore unreal. Indeed, it is the inadequate conception of personality, whether in the case of God or man, which spoils so much of Schleiermacher's best work. The love of God thus becomes quite a minor consideration, and is not given by any means its due weight in the work of salvation. In consequence, the relation of the redeemed to God is described in terms which almost exclude love, and are very far from conveying any adequate conception of the experience of a soul that has come to know forgiveness and the working of the divine grace. In the same way Schleiermacher's view of sanctification and the new life seems to be without due motive power, and to lack the joy and spontaneity even of an average Christian experience.

It must also be said that the description which he gives of the activity of Christ in the work of sanctification and of the relation between His life and that of the believer is too mechanical. It is not sufficiently conceived in terms of a personal relationship in which love and trust are governing principles. Submission to Christ is regarded as involving a repulsion of sin almost in the magical way which Schleiermacher is so anxious to condemn in other connections. Here, as elsewhere, sufficient stress is not laid on the activity of the human will in the processes of conversion and sanctification. No doubt much

is to be laid to the account of union with Christ on the part of the believer, but ultimately the appeal is to the will, and the resulting processes are not unconscious but voluntary. Otherwise it is hard to see how they can have any moral worth. Again the emergence of the old sin consciousness in the life of the sanctified is not merely a natural incident in the soul's life. It has its moral implications. It presents certain raw material to the will; and as the will deals with this does it contribute to or hinder the process of sanctification.

What Schleiermacher says as to the ultimate triumph of God's good will in the salvation of all men, would have been more to the point had he given a larger place to the love of God in the whole work of salvation. If His love is active at one point it will be active at all, and to make it the prime motive in God's dealing with men is to remove the sense of artificiality which gathers round so much of the theology of the subject.

Indeed it may be said in criticism of the whole of this part of Schleiermacher's work, that it does not fully carry out his own principle of looking to the consciousness of the Christian as the regulative force in his religion. It needs to be re-interpreted in the light of a truer psychology and a more sympathetic reading of normal Christian experience. It is always difficult in analysing the work of regeneration to assign their proper parts to the action of God on the one

hand, and of the individual on the other. The attempts to do so have divided Christendom, and it cannot be said that Schleiermacher is more successful here than most of his predecessors, although he does recognize the need to allow scope for both divine and human instrumentality. The following statement of the position by a modern divine [1] will serve at once as a contrast and a complement to the position he takes up: "In the inward process of salvation, and especially in this willing and doing, God does all and also man does all. But God takes precedence. For it is He that quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were. Here, we say, as the Apostle does in another case, this is a great mystery. Let us recognize it as a mystery bound up with any hope we ourselves have of proving to be children of God. And, under the sense of it, with fear and trembling, let us work, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do." And again: "When I trace back any of my actions to the fountain where it takes its rise as mine, I find that fountain in my will. The materials which I take up into my act, the impressions which gather together to create a situation for me, may all have their separate history going back in the order of cause and effect to the beginning of the world, but that

[1] Dr. Rainy, "Epistle to the Philippians," *Expositor's Bible*, ch. vii.

which makes it mine is that I will, I choose, and thereupon I do it."

True and subtle as are Schleiermacher's discussions on sin, conversion and sanctification, they fail to convince in the long run, because they are carried out too exclusively in impersonal terms and do not allow sufficient scope for initiative and responsibility on the part either of God or man.

CHAPTER IX

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

THE main principles of Schleiermacher's conception of the Church are set forth, as we have already seen, in the latter part of the Discourses. In the *Glaubenslehre*,[1] however, he elaborates the doctrine of the Christian fellowship from a theological as well as from an ecclesiological point of view. He deals with the subject as exhibiting the relation of the Christian fellowship to the world outside, and with this relation as at once throwing light on and illustrating the divine purpose of Redemption. The communion of believers embodies the redemptive energy of Jesus Christ, through which it has been created. Those who become participators in it are monuments of the work of Grace which has been carried on for them and apart from them. It is the work of Grace to create the felt need for redemption, as a precedent to the redeeming activity of God in Christ. Prior to the coming of Christ there existed a circle of men and women who were prepared to receive the salvation that He brought. His work forms them into a community which holds a similar relation to

[1] Sections 113–163.

the unregenerate world around, within which its influence is exercised with a view of spreading the knowledge and power of Christ. The world is the field for the operations of the Church, and is destined to be brought within its range. In spite of its original perfection it is the sphere within which sin and evil work. Because of that original perfection it can become the sphere of the work of Christ which will lead to a new condition of perfection and blessedness. The work of Christ is one of progressive sanctification, first in the individual believer and then in the community. It is a leaven which will gradually spread until it pervades the whole mass.

On this basis Schleiermacher divides up the subject as follows : (1) The origin of the Church. (2) The present state of the Church. (3) The perfecting of the Church. All these subjects are discussed in view of the relation between the Church and the world. This discussion will involve consideration of the activity of the Christian consciousness, or of Christian experience in relation to sin and salvation and the work of Grace. The end in view is the gradual perfecting of the life of Christ in those who believe on His name.

The origin of the Church.

The Christian Church is formed by the association of regenerate persons for definite mutual influence and co-operation. It is their desire to win others and to perfect the work of the

Kingdom of God in human society. But this association and the ends which it contemplates are subject to the conditions of time and place in which its members find themselves. We must therefore consider the origin of the Church in relation to the divine world order, on the one hand, and in relation to its own unifying principle on the other. This will give us the two subjects of Election, and the Impartation of the Holy Spirit.[1] The one, because Christians are out of the world, and the other because they are formed into a church under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Schleiermacher's treatment of the subject of Election [2] starts from the assertion of a similarity between the laws which govern the Kingdom set up by Jesus Christ, and those of the divine government of the world. Only as we realize this can we hope to understand the mysterious fact of the rejection of the Gospel by some and its acceptance by others. As the Incarnation involves the potential regeneration of the whole human race, so the spread of the Gospel is gradual and subject to the conditions which determine all human activity. The Church comes to reveal as a natural, historical phenomenon, her possession of the supernatural that

[1] These subjects have already been treated in an anticipatory way in the chapter on the Christian Life. They occur here, however, in Schleiermacher's own order of arrangement, and therefore are treated once more in spite of some repetition.

[2] *Glaubenslehre*, 117.

was in Christ Himself. Now the ultimate principle in the divine government of the world is the good pleasure of God. And to this therefore must we also refer the fact of the acceptance of the Gospel by some men and its rejection by others. The same principle also operates in the further fact that some never have the opportunity of hearing the Gospel in this life. It becomes necessary therefore for us to frame a conception of the divine will, such as shall account for the facts, and be free from inner contradictions. We cannot justly complain because Christ did not come into the world sooner than he did, or because some men receive the benefits of the Gospel before others, nor can we explain these facts by referring some of them to the operation of the divine mercy, and others to the operation of the divine righteousness, which would be to destroy the unity of the divine purpose. Still less can we ascribe arbitrariness and favouritism to the will of God, as would be the case if we were to suppose that those who die without the knowledge of redemption are excluded from it for ever. In all these matters Schleiermacher insists that we must remain true to the idea of God as a just and loving ruler, whose aim is gradually to do away with the antithesis between the Church and the world, and to include all men under the operations of His grace. His view of election is such as to make it impossible to think that it would have

been better for any man to have been regenerated sooner than the time appointed in God's providence for him.

With election, therefore, is associated the idea of the divine fore-ordination. The regeneration of each individual is part of the divine world-order in relation to him. The kingdom of Grace is one with the Kingdom of God, and men enter it as the result of the divine determination. It is only by the acknowledgment of the fore-ordination of all mankind to a place in the Kingdom of Grace and to a share in the blessings of Christ, that the Christian consciousness of redemption can be reconciled with the world-order.

Schleiermacher next considers the determining grounds of this election. The initial ground he finds in the good pleasure of God, and the final ground in God's fore-knowledge. These are really but one principle viewed from different standpoints. The operation of these in redemption is to be found in the foreseen faith of the individual, which is itself determined by the divine causality working through the divine good-will. Its object is the world-order as a whole rather than the life of any individual. But it has results for individuals, and these results are the best and most efficient possible. In a note to this section Schleiermacher reiterates his conviction that the Divine fore-ordination to redemption comes ultimately to embrace the whole human race.

The next point to be considered is the relation of the Church to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Those who are sanctified partake of the blessedness which is in Christ through the indwelling of God in Him. But Christians are conscious of this possession not as individuals, but as members of the Christian society. The spiritual life thus created aspires to personify itself in the community. The members of the communion become a moral person with a definite impulse to meet together and to co-operate for the extension of the Kingdom of God. There is thus an indwelling of the divine in the Church comparable to the indwelling of the divine in Christ. This spirit of the Church is the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God, and its bestowal is what we mean by the communication of the Holy Spirit. Schleiermacher claims that this usage is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament on the subject where the Holy Spirit is not regarded as the possession of individuals, but of the totality of the Christian communion. There is a unity in the Church in virtue of this common spirit, and the spirit is one because it has one source, viz. Jesus Christ. If it be objected that this spirit is no more than the common spirit of the human race, the reply is that it is only through the communication and possession of the Holy Spirit that the unity of the human race becomes an accomplished fact. The work of Christ is to realize a union in

faith and love of all mankind. Apart from Christ there is no operation of the Holy Spirit at all.

For the individual believer the consciousness of possessing the Spirit comes through faith in Christ. It is not received from Christ personally as was the case with the first disciples. After the death of their Lord these disciples ceased to be a school, and became a Church with the Spirit as their common possession. In the reception of the Spirit they are themselves active, and He stands to them for their new collective life. So the life of the Church proceeds historically from Christ. In Him is the union of the human and the Divine which in the form of a common Spirit animates those who believe on Him. This spirit is an actual, working force in the common life of believers, and consciously felt in the individuals who make up the community.

The Christian Church is thus the whole body of believers who are animated by this same Spirit through Christ. It is in the world though not of it, and develops itself historically in pursuance of the aims of its Founder. In this process certain permanent and essential features emerge as well as certain other features which are variable. These Schleiermacher next proceeds to discuss.

The permanent features in the life and work of the Church are the Holy Scriptures, the Ministry, the Sacraments, the Office of the Keys and Prayer in the name of Jesus. These concern the testimony of Christ, the fellowship of

Christ, and the connection of the individual with the whole. In relation to them there is a certain unity and self-identity in the Church in spite of differences caused by the relation of the Church to the world.

The New Testament Scriptures are themselves the work of the Holy Spirit and form part of the testimony to Christ which the Church offers to the outside world. They are not a mere dead letter, but part of the ever self-renewing life and activity of the Christian community. Reverence for them is due to our faith in Christ. It is not the authority of the Scriptures which causes faith in Christ, for that would make the Scriptures themselves to rest only on the appeal to reason. Christian doctrines are not regarded as such because of the fact that they have a place in the New Testament. They are there because they are Christian. Hence the importance of the doctrine of the Scriptures for the Church. The New Testament writings express that common Christian spirit, which is the spirit of Christ. The presence of this spirit is the ground of the distinction between canonical and apocryphal books. We are able to judge them in the light of it, though it does not allow us to extend to them a critical and exegetical treatment peculiar to themselves. The selection of individual books for the canon is not the work of some definite apostolic authority or decision, but came about by a gradual process through the action of the

spirit common to the whole Church. Though we are warranted in ascribing these books to the gift of the Holy Spirit, we must at the same time subject them to the freest investigation. The Old Testament books stand on a somewhat different level from the New Testament because the spirit which animates them is the spirit of law rather than of grace. They hold the position they do in the estimation of Christians because of the use of them by Christ and His apostles in the precanonical period. Our standard of judgment is throughout the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum.*

In the ministry of the word of God, Schleiermacher distinguishes between an undetermined and occasional ministry and one which is formal and ordered. Christ's own preaching was a presentation of Himself. It is the duty of the Christian community to present Christ to the world, but this again will be a form of self-presentation. It is a supplying of the Divine Word and must be carried out in conformity with the Scriptures. So far as individual members of the Church are concerned they become organs of this Divine Word in seeking to set forth that in them which is of Christ. They do this in various ways by the influence which they exercise and in various degrees, some being more active in it than others. In order to give regular and orderly expression to the spirit of the Christian community it becomes necessary

to set aside some persons exclusively for this work, and thus a regular ministry arises. But this public ministry of the Word can only be carried out by those who represent the spirit of the Christian community. They should, therefore, be set apart to their office by the communion to which they belong. They do not in themselves, however, exhaust the spiritual activities of the Church, or prevent the exercise of such activities in a more spontaneous manner by individual members of the Church. This public as well as the private ministry of the Church must be regulated by the Holy Scriptures.[1]

In dealing with the Sacraments Schleiermacher begins with Baptism, which he regards as an act of the whole Church by means of which the Church receives individuals into its fellowship.

[1] Cf. Lichtenberger's *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 156, 157. "Schleiermacher insists much on the idea of a living fellowship or community, in opposition to a State Church, or a Theological and clerical Institution." "Setting out from the idea of Christian community he insists much on the doctrine of the Universal Priesthood. He desiderates that a distinction be made between the members of the Church who are more active and those who are more receptive: he recalls, however, the fact that this distinction rests not on a special divine institution but on a natural inequality which exists between them, and which should tend to disappear. The ministry of the Word and also the administration of the Sacraments are acts of the community." In other words he combines the priesthood of believers with the idea of a ministry set apart, in a way that is common among the modern Free Churches.

It takes the place of the actual call of Christ. The rite indicates the fact that God's justifying grace is imparted to the individual concerned. It has both an inner and an outer aspect. The latter is the physical act, and the former the intention to receive the baptized into communion which it signifies. It is through baptism that the assurance of the new birth is obtained and not *vice versa*. But this applies to the internal motive and not to the outward physical act. The act becomes valid through the intention, but the intention is not merely that of the administrator, but that of the whole Church. The act is that of the whole Church even though it may be carried out only in a section of the Church. For it depends on Christ's institution and is an act of faith. Schleiermacher considers that infant baptism is valid only when it is an act of faith and involves a confession of faith, to be completed in subsequent Christian instruction. There are no traces of it in the New Testament, but it may be justified by the necessities of the Church and of parents.

As Baptism is the act whereby members are received into the Christian communion, so the Lord's Supper is an act whereby their communion of life with Christ is preserved. Men need that their relation with Christ should be maintained and strengthened. Among the means to this are private meditation and the public worship of God. To this latter belongs the supper of the

Lord in which the spiritual life is nourished in a peculiar way through participation in the Body and Blood of Christ. It is to be distinguished from all other forms of public service by the fact that in them the benefit to be obtained depends on the idiosyncrasy of the individual, while in the supper all members are placed in a similar relation to the blessedness in Christ. The benefit comes immediately from Christ Himself, and the administrator is only the organ of Christ's institution. When Christ spake of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He had not the supper in mind so much as the need for constant maintenance of fellowship with Him. The supper provides this by its real union between the members of the Church, which becomes also a union with their Lord. This becomes the more real through the observance of a rite which Christ Himself ordained. Schleiermacher condemns the Roman view which makes the benefit of the sacrament depend on consecration and adoration of the elements, as a magical corruption of the rite. Nor will he allow that the rite is simply one of testimony or confession. In the supper Christ's invitation to spiritual participation in His life is actualized, and the words of institution assure such spiritual participation to the believer. It means the renewal of the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the perpetuation of that divine life in us which is in danger of being interrupted by sin. This

assurance is strengthened by the sharing in it of the whole body of believers. Union with Christ is not to be thought of apart from a similar union with the Church.

In dealing with the Office of the Keys Schleiermacher holds that in the Church some kind of law is necessary. If the Church were perfect and the will of the whole were the will of all the individuals comprising it this would not be the case. But there is an admixture of the world in the Church which makes it needful to have some means of expressing and enforcing the will of Christ. The legislative activity of the Church simply perpetuates the will of Christ inherent in the Church by virtue of her possession of His Spirit. It is an exercise of His kingly activity. The power of binding and loosing Schleiermacher interprets as the ability of the Church to give certain commands or prohibitions, or to leave certain things to be determined by individuals. The power is only limited by the necessity of maintaining the common feeling of the members of the Church. It is the business of each individual in the Church so to act as that his personal action shall be in accordance with the general will. No action of this kind, however, can be final so long as the life of the Church expresses the kingly mind of Christ.

In dealing with prayer in the name of Jesus, Schleiermacher argues that the Church is always conscious of a sense of need. This is partly

due to the conflict with the outside world, and partly to the consciousness of her own imperfections. This leads to prayer arising out of the connection between the God-consciousness within and the desire for the highest. True prayer is an expression of the common spirit of the Church or an activity of the Holy Spirit in the form of desire. But the desires of individuals are all more or less defective, and hence the necessity for prayer in the name of Jesus, *i. e.* in regard to matters which concern Him, and are according to His mind or will. Such prayer will show that the petitioner occupies a relation to the kingdom and will of God analogous to His. It will also show faith in the supreme and permanent worth of the Kingdom. The collective prayer of the Church will always be of this kind, and such prayer always meets with its answer.

On this showing, therefore, prayer is not exercising an influence on God. This would be to put a spell on God of a magical kind, and such an idea would contradict the whole spirit of Schleiermacher's teaching. Christian prayer is but the anticipation of the activity of the Divine Will, and is therefore the normal expression of a true piety.

We now proceed to consider those variable characteristics of the Church which are due to its place in and connection with the world. If the Church were perfect, and its members

wholly spiritual, then the separation between Church and world would be complete. But in all the members of the Church, as it is at present constituted, certain worldly elements inhere. Therefore we must distinguish between the invisible Church, which represents the totality of the operations of the Divine Spirit, and the visible Church wherein the lives of the regenerate are marred by sin, and the Church and world co-exist. The invisible Church is the true Church, one and undivided in spirit, and infallible in action. The visible Church, owing to the presence within it of alien and worldly elements, is imperfect and subject to division. The divisions within it, however, do not destroy the Christian communion of its members. All the separate parts acknowledge the work of the Spirit as a principle of unity. In all these parts also there is manifest the desire to express the unity of the Spirit in a further reunion, and there is no real enmity between them. Potentially they all belong to a larger communion, which will be established in fact whenever the necessary conditions are present. The present link which binds them is their common connection with the revelation in the Gospel. Their differences are only relative and destined to disappear, for even heretics have a part in the Church. In the visible Church error seems to be inevitable. Under existing conditions no doctrinal statement of truth can be other than partial and

imperfect. Men must test them for themselves and acknowledge their truth in so far as they agree with their own personal religious consciousness and experience, or with the Scriptures. Under these tests the Church's doctrine will gradually improve. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and will be wrought out through the individual members of the Church. In the same way the Spirit will work for the perfecting of the Church in other directions. Under its influence Christianity will spread throughout the earth and supersede those other religions which are antagonistic to its spirit. Thus the Church militant will gradually become the Church triumphant.

In discussing the perfecting of the Church, Schleiermacher contends that there cannot be a doctrine of the perfected Church because the Scripture statements on the subject transcend our mortal apprehension, and have not anything corresponding to them in the Christian consciousness. The ground of this process of perfecting will be the work of the Holy Spirit, and that will continue until the Church and the world become practically conterminous.

In the same way we cannot make the belief in personal immortality into a Christian doctrine, even though we find it to have been universal in the primitive Christian community. It is not a matter of rational proof, and indeed scientific investigation of the subject often leads to the contradiction of the belief. To rest it

upon merely intellectual grounds would be to turn dogmatics into a philosophy. Nor can the belief be said to be given in, or to be an inseparable accompaniment of, the God-consciousness. It is quite conceivable that the renunciation of the hope of personal immortality might be an integral part of religion, and the retention of the hope may be a purely selfish thing. It is only faith in the Redeemer which gives us any ground of assurance on such a matter. His work in and for us requires that our union with Him shall remain unbroken, and that this should be so requires that personal continuance after death shall be at least a possibility for us all. It is to secure this and to give it some real ground that is the aim of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the last things. This doctrine may be regarded as one of the Prophetical Articles of the Church, but as it deals with what is future and problematical it has a less sure basis than some others. Along with it as Prophetical Articles, Schleiermacher also enumerates the doctrines of Christ's return, of the Resurrection of the Body, of the Final Judgment and of Eternal Blessedness.

A remarkable commentary on Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Church is to be found in a number of fugitive writings on ecclesiastical subjects during the later years of his life in Berlin. The Prussian government, under Stein, was anxious to include the Church in its schemes of reform,

and Schleiermacher wrote a long memorandum on the subject. He was entirely opposed to the general policy of the government, which aimed at making the Church more of a State department, and bringing it under the direct control of the Minister of the Interior. While Schleiermacher does not advocate complete separation of Church and State, he lifts up his voice boldly for a large measure of freedom.[1] He draws a vivid picture of the evil condition of the Protestant Church of his day, of the entire lack of discipline within it, and of the indifference of the people to religious observances. He considers that this is largely due to the bondage of the Church to the State, and that there can be no real reform without giving the laity a much larger voice in Church affairs. On its spiritual side the Church ought to be independent,

[1] Cf. *The Brief Outline of Theological Study*, p. 213. "Setting out on the one hand from the principle, that if the Church does not wish to be a secular power, it must not be willing either to be entangled in the organization of the secular power: and on the other hand from the principle, that what such members of the Church as stand at the head of the civil government do within the department of the Church they can do nevertheless only in the form of Church guidance: we are able to state the problem only in the manner following. It is to be determined in what manner, the ecclesiastical authority has to labour, under the various circumstances which may be given, for the accomplishment of this object: that the Church shall be kept from falling, either into an impotent independence in regard to the State, or into a servitude, no matter how respectable, towards the latter."

and the control of the State should be limited to the administration of its property, and the exercising of discipline. For the internal administration of the Church and for the regulation of its spiritual affairs Schleiermacher recommends a system of synods elected by the people. Pastors should be appointed by the congregations from lists which the synods approved.

It is needless to say that these suggestions never went further than the pigeon-hole of a government department, and they won for their author no little unpopularity in official circles. Later on, in 1812, he returned to the charge in some trenchant criticism of the Liturgy Commission. Here again his plea is for liberty and for a large variety in form. He is strongly against any attempt to impose uniformity, and urges that no reform will be worth anything that is not based on a change in parochial organization of such a kind as to give the people more say in the matter. Largely owing to his protest, the labours of the commission came to nothing. But the government went to work in other ways, first trying to impose a special liturgy on garrison churches and later, in 1821, by using coercive measures with the clergy, especially in large towns. This gave rise to one of the finest of Schleiermacher's pamphlets[1] on the Liturgical rights of

[1] *Über das liturgische Recht evangelischer Landesfürsten: ein theologisches Bedenken von Pacificus Sincerus.*

Cf. *The Brief Outline of Theological Study*, p. 199. "In

the Evangelical princes. In this he strongly contends that the political rights of the princes never gave them any ecclesiastical authority. He addresses himself, almost in the fiery fashion of the *Reden*, to the consciences of princes, pastors and people, and points out the extreme peril of personal rule in matters of religion. He insists that it is only the Church itself that has any right to regulate these questions of internal life and thought. If the Church is to be reformed it must be in such way as shall enable her to exercise such functions as these. The pamphlet gave rise to a furious discussion and a kind of compromise was arrived at. In the interests of peace, Schleiermacher gave way so far as to accept a minimum of the new regulations. He was not of the stuff of which religious reformers are made, and there was no really strong public opinion to back him up.

Schleiermacher also took a leading part in the attempt to unite the two branches of the Prussian Church, Lutheran and Reformed. In a pamphlet

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the Evangelical Church we find the system of worship consisting almost everywhere of two elements: one which is left entirely to the free productivity of the individual by whom the Church Service is conducted, and another, in which he merely occupies the position of an organ of the Ecclesiastical Government."

"The liturgical element can be a matter of discussion here, only upon the supposition that in it, too, certain room is still afforded for a free self-determination; and only in the degree in which this is the case."

on the subject he wrote : " Luther and Melanchthon, Calvin and Zwingle, and their various fellow-labourers were not creators of a new state of things, but merely instruments in the hands of Divine Providence; and it is, and ever will be, their highest glory, that they were found worthy to be such. They produced nothing new, but merely cleansed the old doctrine from the rubbish that had been heaped upon it, so that it could appear again in its pristine purity and commend itself thus to men. The work of the Reformation was not, therefore, to found a Lutheran Church —against which, indeed, no one protested more warmly than Luther himself; nor was it to found a Reformed Church, but to bring forth in renewed glory the Evangelical Church, which is guided and governed by its Founder Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. . . . We ought not, therefore, to call ourselves Lutheran nor Reformed, but we ought to call ourselves Evangelical Christians, after His name and His holy evangel; for in our name our faith and our confession ought to be made known."

It was in the spirit of these words that Schleiermacher also opposed the attempt to bind the evangelical confession on all the Churches. Writing in 1819 he argued that Protestants cannot be bound either to the ecclesiastical organizations or dogmatic expressions of the past. Creeds are no real barriers against unbelief, for they are always capable of various

interpretations. To enforce them is to keep out of the ministry the best and most conscientious men. The Church will never be revived by a return to the methods of Scholasticism, but only by a real awakening of religious life, and giving to the laity their proper share in the regulation of its affairs. The only thing to which Schleiermacher would bind the clergy is a repudiation of Roman Catholicism. In other respects he is all for toleration, and the largest possible liberty.

These polemical writings are among his very best work. They are calm, critical, closely reasoned, and full of a fine irony. At the same time they serve to bring out the truly religious nature of the man, his high ideal of the Church and of Christian worship, and his profound belief in the liberty which is in Christ Jesus. No estimate of his work is complete which does not take account of these writings, and of his sermons as well as his larger books. They show that he was much more than the merely scholastic theologian. He was a real man, with a warm human interest, especially in that side of religion where it touches most closely the needs and lives of common men.

Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Church and the emphasis he lays upon it is of considerable importance as it affects his general theological position. It belongs mainly to the later stages of his development, and marks a real advance

on the period of the *Reden*. Then his conception of religion was, as we have seen, very largely based on the individual consciousness and the individual sense of dependence. In dealing with the Church, however, Schleiermacher seems to find the roots of religion in the experience of the Christian community. This gives at once much greater point and value to his whole treatment of the matter of religious experience, and is a much more fruitful presentation of it than the purely individualistic one of his earlier period.

CHAPTER X

THE PLACE OF SCHLEIERMACHER IN MODERN THEOLOGY

As we have already seen, the beginning of the nineteenth century marked an epoch in the development of religious thought in Europe. To the superficial observer it was a time of confusion and unrest. The course of philosophical speculation on the one hand, and the rapid emergence of the physical sciences on the other, were making great inroads on the position of those who attempted to retain any religious *Weltanschauung*. The problem of human life had come to be stated in a new and urgent form, and one for which the current systems of thought had no adequate solution. Ritschl put this problem in his own way when he said:[1] "Man as a spiritual being on the one hand, makes the claim to be of greater worth than the whole natural system: and on the other, finds himself limited, hemmed in, and subjected by the latter." The eternal question as to man's place in the Universe, and his claim to a spiritual nature of his own had once more emerged and was demanding solution on new and broader lines. On the

[1] *Drei akademische Reden*, p. 10.

one side rationalism and on the other dogmatism were both alike discredited, and men were beginning to cast about for a reconstruction of theology and a restatement of belief in terms of the new learning both philosophical and scientific. Schleiermacher was among the first to give permanent and substantial expression to this movement. He was essentially a man of his day, governed by his antecedents, limited by its outlook, and conditioned by its aims. But at the same time his work had an enduring value. It is true that he founded no school in the strict sense of the term, but he was the originator of a new method and the embodiment of a new spirit. Every theologian of note who comes after him, is more or less in his debt, and with many of them the debt is greater than they will acknowledge. Even those who oppose him cannot help using him, and their imitation of him is sometimes more significant than their criticism. He overthrew once and for all the rationalist theory of " natural " religion and the rationalist estimate of Christian theology. He vindicated the right of religion to be, and to be considered among the subjects of paramount human interest and importance. He first applied to the study of Christian Theology the modern scientific spirit and methods, and he insisted on the historical character of the Christian faith and on the importance of its history for the understanding of its spiritual content. All these were

matters which the tendency of the times had brought into special prominence, and we have now to discover Schleiermacher's point of attachment with them, and the way in which he mediated them to later days.

In order successfully to place Schleiermacher in his own day we must first of all go back to Kant. After Kant philosophy in Germany followed two main lines—the one a reaction against his critical position, the other a development from it. The first of these is represented by men like Hamann, Herder and Jacobi, and the other by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. The tendency of the reaction was to appeal to faith against reason, or to find in faith what knowledge was unable to give. The tendency of the development was to emphasize the practical side of Kant's teaching by drawing closer the connection between religion and morality and attempting a new philosophy of religion on the basis of the rationality of religion and history. Schleiermacher's position may be described as midway between these two main schools of thought. He was a disciple of Kant, but he was also deeply influenced by the Romantic school. He was fully conscious of the limitations of human knowledge, and he saw only a symbolic value in those ideas which transcend sense-experience. But he laid a new stress on feeling as representing the innermost life of man, and found in it a means of entering into immediate relations with the

highest. As Höffding says of him,[1] "Schleiermacher's idiosyncrasy—which makes him one of the most significant figures in the history of the philosophy of religion—was his view that that which cannot stand before criticism, by which it is allowed no objective validity, need not lose its religious value if it can be exhibited as the symbolic expression of an experience made by man in his innermost life of feeling. And these experiences of feeling, these inner frames of mind, which can never find complete expression in words, were what Schleiermacher regarded as real religion. He let the purging fires of the critical philosophy consume all that was finite and external in his faith while he retained the kernel only, which was all the more valuable in his eyes now that he had tested it. But he did not adopt Kant's philosophy as he found it. On the contrary, he assumed a critical attitude towards it, so critical indeed that he was accused of doing an injustice to the great master, whose disciple he really always remained."

It was in reaction partly against Kant, and partly against the rationalism of the enlightenment that Schleiermacher fell under the influence of the Romantic movement. But he was never dominated by it, and he escaped altogether the weak æstheticism which was its too frequent issue. He became its master rather than its

[1] *History of Modern Philosophy* (Eng. Trans.), vol. ii, p. 195.

servant, and took from it certain elements which he fused into the main body of his thought. The general character of the movement is perhaps best illustrated by the work of Novalis. Like Schleiermacher he had been trained in Moravian circles, and sought to relate Romanticism to religion. He aimed at revivifying the dead ecclesiastical Protestantism of the time, by bringing culture and philosophy to bear on the religious life. If Schleiermacher, whose aims were the same, succeeded where Novalis failed, it was because he early escaped from the too exclusive dominance of the Romantic ideal, and brought to the study of religion not only a cultured imagination, but a critical mind and a moral vision. With Novalis the Romantic spirit issued in a " magic idealism " which glorified Catholicism as the perfect religion. With Schleiermacher Romanticism gave place to a critical idealism which liberated Protestant theology from its ecclesiastical fetters, and remains a living impulse to this day. But he did not rest here. What he learned from Plato and Spinoza helped to correct the onesidedness of his idealism and opened the way for a new religious view of the Universe. His debt to Spinoza was very real, but the Spinoza Schleiermacher knew and reverenced was in some respects a creation of his own, as the following well-known apostrophe testifies, " Join me in reverently offering a tribute to the manes of the holy and rejected Spinoza !

Him the lofty world-spirit penetrated, the Infinite was his beginning and end, the universe his only and infinite love. In holy innocence and deep humility, he reflected himself in the eternal world and saw how he in turn was its chosen mirror. Full of religion was he, and full of the Holy Spirit, and therefore he stands alone and unapproached, a master in his art, but exalted above the profane herd of those who practise it without disciples and without citizenship."

Schleiermacher's relation to the thought of his age and the debt which he owed to his forerunners and contemporaries has been well summed up as follows by Pfleiderer.[1] "These manifold elements, Kantian criticism, Fichtean idealism, Schelling's philosophy of identity, Spinoza's pantheism, and Plato's dialectic—all extend into Schleiermacher's thought. Nor did he merely connect them externally in an arbitrary eclecticism : his mind was no less actively reproductive than receptive on every side, and these elements were fused into a whole which was new and bore the stamp of originality."[2] How truly original Schleiermacher was, however, is best understood

[1] *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i, p. 304.

[2] Cf. with this the judgment of Lücke: "Whoever reads the Discourses attentively and without prejudice will easily perceive that in his mode of thinking with regard to religion, Schleiermacher is neither Jacobean nor Fichtean, neither Platonist nor Spinozist, but completely himself : and, moreover, himself with that soul of his deeply rooted in Christianity."

not only by comparing him with his contemporaries, but by studying the results of his work as these appear in his followers and in the whole development of modern theology. As we have already seen, he did not found any school which can be justly called by his name, but he originated certain lines of investigation, and emphasized certain broad principles, the effect of which is still being felt. It is of the value of this work that we have now to try and form some estimate.

In the department of the Philosophy of religion Schleiermacher's chief contribution was a new and profounder estimate of religion itself, and of the place which it holds in the life and progress of the human race. He made for ever impossible that hard and fast distinction between religion as natural and revealed, and that interpretation of natural religion which seeks to assign to it a merely intellectual and philosophical origin and value. He set religion free from dependence on philosophy and gave to it a place and worth of its own. It is treated as a normal and legitimate expression of man's nature, and not as an excrescence upon it. Without in any way anticipating modern anthropological and psychological investigations into the origin and worth of religion, he at once prepared the way for, and justified such enquiries.[1]

[1] Cf. Eucken. *The Problem of Human Life* (Eng. Trans.), p. 509. "Schleiermacher ensures the independence of religion by recognizing that it has a spiritual basis of its own, namely, feeling. But we must carefully bear in mind the position

Religion, as Schleiermacher expounds it, is founded in the human consciousness as such. It belongs to what is deepest and truest in human experience, and is not a product either of thought on the one hand, or of moral action on the other. It is an original endowment of our nature, and antecedent in experience both to thought and action. "Religion is opposed to metaphysics and morals, in all that constitutes its essence and that characterizes its effects. Practical life is Art; speculation is Science; religion is sense and taste for the Infinite." Any true understanding of

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that feeling holds in Schleiermacher, if we would rightly estimate the significance of this departure. Feeling, for Schleiermacher, is not just one mental faculty among others, but as 'self-consciousness in its immediacy,' 'the original, undifferentiated unity of thinking and willing,' it is the very root of all life: in feeling we are not cut loose from the world, but inwardly linked with its infinity. A religion thus based, on feeling, on the consciousness of unity with the Eternal, is centrally related to the whole development of life, but at the same time maintains, in virtue of its purely inward nature, its own domain and sphere of thought. Whatever doctrines it lays down cannot possibly come into conflict with science and philosophy, because they are not statements concerning outward things, but simply helps towards the expression of the religious feeling. This expression may very likely vary with the varying phases of historical development, but religion itself is untouched by time. Thus the way is prepared for the recognition of the historical factor in religion, and a reconciliation facilitated between religion and the work of civilization. All this has made Schleiermacher more influential than any other philosopher in stirring and quickening the religious life of the nineteenth century."

religion must therefore be based on a study of it as it is presented in history, and in the consciousness of religious men. We must approach it as we would any other object of investigation, humbly and reverently, seeking to let it speak to us of what it is and does.

So in dealing with Christianity Schleiermacher starts with faith, or the conscious communion with God, which is the expression of the new life in Christ. Grounded as it is in the spiritual experience of the individual this faith is something more than the result of the application of the intellect to Christian truth, still less is it belief in a human creed. It is more than mere feeling, for it has results and is capable of a development which can be measured. It is at once a gift and a life divinely bestowed upon men.

All this has had a very marked effect on the study of religion since Schleiermacher's day. It made a science of Religion possible, and delivered the philosophy of religion from *a priori* and Rationalistic methods. Schleiermacher's determination to view religion in the concrete, as historically conditioned, rather than in the abstract, has given a great impulse to the science of comparative religion, and a new importance to the idea of the religious community or organization. Ritschl regarded this as one of the most important results of Schleiermacher's teaching, and in this matter at least, showed himself to be his disciple. Schleiermacher's own contribution

to the study of religions as distinguished from religion, with its divisions into the fetichistic, polytheistic, and monotheistic or pantheistic stages, is not, of course, of any permanent value. It may be said, however, without any fear of contradiction that his method and example gave the first impulse to the scientific classification of religions and to the anthropological and psychological investigation of them which has proved so exceedingly fruitful.

But Schleiermacher's services were by no means confined to securing for religion a proper place and standing. His interpretation of its meaning, and function and origin was also epoch-making, and was met with strenuous advocacy on the one hand, and with equally strenuous opposition on the other. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that his conclusions on this head have so easily lent themselves to brief verbal statement. Every one knows the popular description of Schleiermacher's teaching as reducing religion to feeling, and ultimately to the feeling of dependence. This is quite true, so far as it goes, but no such statement of the case gives any idea of the richness and relevance of Schleiermacher's exposition of it, or of the wide-reaching consequences in which it has resulted. Feeling with him is far more than sensation, sentiment, and sentimentality. It is nothing less than that religious consciousness which is at once native to man, and the expression of his highest being.

The emphasis he lays upon it is but one way of expressing the fact that religion is native to man, and not the secondary product of thought or custom. No one will question the religious value of the consciousness of dependence on God, but this does not exhaust Schleiermacher's interpretation of feeling. Dorner goes so far as to say, "According to Schleiermacher, Christianity consists in the feeling or consciousness of Redemption." He carries out, that is to say, in his interpretation of Christianity, his general religious principle but he has no difficulty in making it express that which is special and peculiar to Christianity as a religion of Redemption. Here again, he makes the consciousness of the believer the subject and starting-point of his investigation, and builds upon the data which it provides.

In this respect again, Schleiermacher's influence has been deep and lasting. The tendency to emphasize the experimental side of religion is sometimes regarded as being a feature of present-day theology. No doubt it has recently excited fresh attention and has received more systematic treatment, but it is to Schleiermacher that we owe the first impulse to it. Coming as it did from him and mediated through Ritschl, it has been among the most fruitful influences in modern theology. In order to estimate it aright it would be necessary to review the whole history of the philosophy of religion in the nineteenth century. Suffice it to say that the theological position of

any man or church is now largely determined by the extent to which he is willing to give its proper place to feeling or experience as a factor in religious development. To ignore this is to be in danger of a more or less barren intellectualism, while to over-emphasize it is to fall into a one-sided mysticism. The position which Schleiermacher took up may be justified as a necessary and healthy reaction against rationalism, but it needs to be modified in the light of a more complete and scientific theology, which will take account of thought and will as well as of feeling. The modern attitude on the question has been well summed up as follows:[1] "If we now try to gather up the fruits of the foregoing discussion, the result, I think, will be a full recognition of the importance of feeling in the religious consciousness. It makes for development in stimulating belief and lending dynamic energy to the will; but of itself it cannot mark out the line of progress nor control the movement. On the other hand, in the form of sentiment, feeling plays a conservative part and lends its support to what is traditional. It resists the disintegrating activity of reflective thought. . . . The value of feeling in religion is at its highest when it coheres with the practical and intellectual functions, neither dominating the other elements nor being suppressed by them, but playing its

[1] Galloway, *The Principles of Religious Development*, p. 129.

own part in sympathy with the other parts of the human system. In harmoniously fulfilling its office feeling proves itself an indispensable factor in religion. Without it piety in the true sense is impossible, as the consciousness that religion is real, personal and inward, only comes through the feeling element. In the beginnings of religion feeling was present in the emotional impulses which prompted to worship: and at the highest stage which religion has reached it blends with the human attitude to the infinite and eternal Being. . . . The secular labour of thought has not dissipated the mystery which overshadows the world and human life: and the dread with which early man regarded the mysterious powers behind the moving spectacle of nature, survives in the awe which mingles in the attitude of his latest descendant to the Being he calls God." [1]

[1] Cf. also on this point an article in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, by Otto Lempp, Jan. 1911, p. 48. " Schleiermacher hat seinen Ausgangspunkt in der religiösen Erfahrung genommen: ein anderer Weg war gar nicht mehr möglich. Aber was ist 'religiöse Erfahrung?' Es ist wohl zu bemerken: Schleiermacher geht nicht von dem Ganzen der Erfahrung aus, die auch nach seiner Ansicht in jedem religiösen Moment enthalten ist, sondern von einer Abstraktion aus der Erfahrung. Nach seiner eigenen Aussage schliesst jeder Moment der Frömmigkeit irgend ein Wissen oder Tun ein. Das ganze geistige Leben des Menschen ist als Einheit bei der Frömmigkeit in besondere Weise bestimmt. Schleiermacher meint nun trotzdem das Wissen und Tun als sekundär und nur das Gefühl als

To this also must be added the fact that when feeling has found expression in a religious experience which has been shared by men of varying types and stages of development, it has become a fact of the utmost value in determining the function and nature of religion itself. The modern psychological treatment of religion has established this beyond dispute, but it has at the same time, shown that Schleiermacher's presentation of the subject was one-sided, and needs to be supplemented both from the intellectual and the experimental point of view. Just as his treatment of religions was found to be inadequate because of the limited nature of the knowledge of historical religions in his time, so in regard to religion itself his whole discussion, true and pertinent as it is up to a certain point, needs to be supplemented by a deeper and wider view of the relation of religion to the life and destiny of man. The limits within which he treats the subject are too narrow, and in the emphasis he gives to certain very necessary considerations he tends to lose sight of others which are equally important. But it is still true to say

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wesentlich in der Frömmigkeit bezeichnen zu dürfen, und zwar deshalb, weil offenbar weder die Klarheit des Wissens noch der Erfolg des Tuns, sondern allein die Stärke des dabei beteiligten Gefühls das Mass der Frömmigkeit bestimme. Daraus folgt aber zunächst nur, dass eben das Gefühl ein besserer Gradmesser für die Frömmigkeit sei, als Wissen und Tun, aber noch nicht das die Frömmigkeit nichts Anderes sei, als eine Bestimmtheit des Gefühls."

that his whole treatment of the religious consciousness is as fruitful as it was original. How deeply it has penetrated into modern thinking may be judged from the following words of Dr. John Caird, in which the student of Schleiermacher will recognize some very familiar ideas and turns of expression.[1] "Oneness of mind, and will with the divine mind and will is not the future hope and aim of religion, but its very beginning and birth in the soul. To enter on the religious life is to terminate the struggle. In that act which constituted the beginning of the religious life, call it faith, or trust, or self-surrender, or by whatever name you will—there is involved the identification of the finite with a life which is eternally realized. It is true, indeed, that the religious life is progressive: but understood in the light of the foregoing idea, religious progress is not progress *towards*, but *within*, the sphere of the Infinite. It is not the vain attempt by endless finite additions and increments to become possessed of infinite wealth, but it is the endeavour by the constant exercise of spiritual activity, to appropriate that infinite inheritance of which we are already in possession. The whole future of the religious life is given in its beginning, but it is given implicitly. The position of the man who has entered on the religious life is that evil, error, imperfection, do not really belong to him; they are excrescences

[1] *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 298.

which have no organic relation to his true nature: they are already virtually as they will be actually, suppressed and annulled, and in the very process of being annulled they become the means of spiritual progress."

When we turn from the more philosophical side of Schleiermacher's presentation of religion to the dogmatic, we have first to recognize the fact that he systematized theological science in a way that had not been attempted before. In that very important little book, *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums* ("Outlines of Theological Science") he lays the foundation for all future systems of theology, and makes possible the modern discipline known as Theological Encyclopædia. He seeks to set forth a complete scheme of theological science, deriving it from certain fundamental principles, and showing the relation of all the branches to the root and stem. He makes the Christian consciousness fundamental, and deals with the various forms in which it finds expression. The book shows a grasp of the subject and a logical relation of its various parts which make it still exceedingly suggestive. In his *Glaubenslehre* Schleiermacher has a long section on Dogmatics, in which he expounds his ideas as to the systematization of theology more in detail. Here he breaks at once with the ordinary ecclesiastical method of elaborating certain doctrines and making them external standards by which the

faith of Churches and of individuals is to be judged. He begins at the centre and seeks to set forth the inner nature of religion, and especially of Christianity in such a way as to show its naturalness to man, and its independence of knowledge, on the one hand, whether in the form of revelation or philosophy, and of morality on the other.[1] He treats Christianity as an historical religion among other historical religions, and shows its supremacy in virtue of its intrinsic worth as an expression of the religious consciousness. He vindicates the place of the religious consciousness or experience in human life, and on the basis of it restates the various credal and confessional interpretations of Christianity. In doing this he seeks to bring out the inner content of Christian doctrine, to deliver it from various misconceptions which have obscured its truth, and to exclude from the survey everything which is not and cannot be interpreted as a direct expression of the Christian religious consciousness. At the same time he treats his whole subject as subordinated to the interests of the Church and as an instru-

[1] Cf. Bender. "Schleiermacher's greatest service is the fruitful application of the analytical method to the investigation of the religious process in itself and in its relation to the whole spiritual life; and as a complement to this ever one-sided subjective method he emphatically postulated the comparative investigation of positive religions, that has been the firm starting-point and central view-point of all succeeding theology."

ment for the advancement of Protestantism. It was really in order to give a broader platform to Protestantism and to deliver it from the narrow and intolerant orthodoxy of the time that the *Glaubenslehre* was written. In this respect, at any rate, Schleiermacher builded better than he knew. His work is far more than a merely temporary polemic or manifesto. It produced a marked effect in his day, not only because of its breadth, insight, and acuteness, but also because of its intensely religious spirit. In a scoffing and rationalistic age Schleiermacher treated religion as a subject of serious thought and enquiry, and abundantly vindicated for theology a place among those studies that are of vital importance for the human race.

Turning now to the details of Schleiermacher's system we have to admit in the first place the inadequacy of his doctrine of God. In his strong reaction against Deism he tended to adopt pantheistic forms of expression and to emphasize the divine immanence at the expense of His transcendence. He was not concerned to prove the objective reality of the Being of God, but was deeply interested in asking what God was to the individual.[1] This led him to the position that "all attributes which we ascribe to God, denote nothing separate in God, but

[1] Cf. Lempp, *op. cit.*, p. 55. "Die Religion nur daran Interesse hat, was Gott für uns, für mich und dich, ist, und nicht daran, was er an Sich ist."

only something separate in the manner in which we refer our feeling of dependence to Him." We have seen how this was condemned by Philippi as "the very abyss of pantheism." But even he admitted that we only know God "as He exists relatively to us in revelation not as He is in Himself." The truth is that Schleiermacher's pantheism was more than anything else a matter of terminology. But even here he sufficiently guarded himself by the language he used in regard to the divine causality, and he adds to the bare substance of Spinoza the idea that God is an active and living energy. He is more than merely the "somewhat" on which we depend. He is the immanent cause of all things and He governs the universe He has brought into being. His activity is an activity of will as well as an influence. The real defect in this doctrine is in its view of God as Person. Schleiermacher has no consistent idea of Personality, and quite fails to develop the conception of the Personality of God. He frames his doctrine on *a priori* lines and takes but little account of the view of the Person of God set forth in the New Testament and in the teaching of Christ. On the question of the Trinity he repudiates the ecclesiastical position, and adopts one which is indistinguishable from Sabellianism, and is entirely consistent with his general attitude. He claimed himself that his pantheism, so-called, was not inconsistent with

theism, and was not to be regarded as a veiled negation of theism, as when, *e. g.*, he says: "If we keep pantheism to the customary formula, One and All, even then God and the world remain distinct, at least in point of function: and therefore a pantheist of this kind, when he regards himself as part of the world, feels himself with this All dependent on that which is the One." It is such language as this which gives point to the remark of Strauss as previously quoted: "None of the leading propositions of the first part of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* can be fully understood save as they are retranslated into the formula of Spinoza, from which they were already taken. The relation of God to the world (which forms the basis of his entire theology) according to which both God and world are conceived as equal magnitudes, only that the former is the absolute and undivided unity, while the latter is the unity divided and differentiated, can be explained only from the relation of the *natura naturans* to the *natura naturata* of Spinoza." Here again, however, from what has already been said we can see that the resemblance in terminology does not mean an identity of doctrine. Schleiermacher uses Spinoza's language only in order that he may move at last a step further than his master.

On this showing then, it is not difficult to account for the fact that his doctrine of God has been less marked in its influence on later

theology than some other parts of his system. It certainly gave rise to a reaction against bare deism, and brought into new prominence the conception of the divine immanence. But it also drove some of his more immediate followers to go back beyond their master in this regard to the older and cruder supernaturalism. Alexander Schweizer, for example, returns to the Calvinistic conception of the unconditioned and universal causality of God as the basis of all His action in regard to man and the universe. Ritschl, on the other hand, while denying the competence of philosophy to give a doctrine of God, follows Schleiermacher at a distance in giving a large place to faith in the shaping of his idea of God, and in his derivation from the moral life of man of the conception of God as a unifying principle. Wide as are his divergences from Schleiermacher in many points, the influence of the former may yet be traced throughout his whole discussion of this subject.

The real worth of any system of Christian theology is to be tested by the place it gives to the Person of Jesus Christ. Here the work of Schleiermacher is at once a great success and a great failure. It may be said of him as of Ritschl that his theology was essentially Christocentric. He based his interpretation of Christianity on the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and in so doing he set an example for all future time. But his treatment of the subject is throughout

theological rather than historical. In the *Glaubenslehre* he frames his conception of the Person of the Redeemer in terms suggested by his general conception of God and man and their relations. In Jesus Christ the unity of the human and the divine becomes effective through His possession of a perfect God-consciousness which He can impart to others, and by which they are redeemed. He has for believers "the religious value of God," and it is the impression which His Person produces in and through the Christian community which creates the Christian religion. In his lectures on *The Life of Jesus*, published from a student's notes thirty years after they were delivered, Schleiermacher quite obviously writes history from his own doctrinal standpoint. As has been pointed out it is a life of the Christ of theology rather than of the historical Jesus. This explains the prominent place given to the Fourth Gospel, and the rationalizing tendency which is shown in dealing with many of the incidents in the story. Albert Schweitzer's judgment here is not altogether wide of the mark. He says:[1] "The limitations of the historical Jesus, both in an upward and downward direction, are those only which apply equally to the Jesus of dogma. The uniqueness of His divine self-consciousness is not to be tampered with. It is equally necessary to avoid Ebionism which does away with the divine

[1] *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 62, 63.

in Him, and Docetism which destroys His humanity." And again: "This dialectic, so fatal often to sound historical views, might have been expressly created to deal with the question of miracle. Compared with Schleiermacher's discussions, all that has been written since upon this subject is mere honest—or dishonest—bungling. Nothing new has been added to what he says, and no one else has succeeded in saying it with the same amazing subtlety. It is true also that no one else has shown the same skill in concealing how much in the way of miracle he ultimately retains and how much he rejects. His solution of the problem is, in fact, not historical, but dialectical, an attempt to transcend the necessity for a rationalistic explanation of miracle which does not really succeed in getting rid of it."

These lectures on the life of Jesus were not published until after Strauss's famous *Leben* had appeared. There is no doubt that some of Schleiermacher's followers thought that they might serve as an antidote to that poison. But Strauss himself formed a far juster estimate of the position when he wrote, in 1865: "I can now say without incurring the reproach of self-glorification, and almost without needing to fear contradiction, that if my *Life of Jesus* had not appeared within a year after Schleiermacher's death, his would not have been withheld for so long. Up to that time it would have been

hailed by the theological world as a deliverer: but for the wounds which my work inflicted on the theology of that day it had neither anodyne nor dressing: nay, it displayed the author as in a measure responsible for the disaster, for the waters which he had admitted drop by drop, were now, in defiance of his prudent reservations, pouring in like a flood." There is a great deal of truth in this, but it does not, therefore, justify the conclusion that there is no positive value at all in the Christology of Schleiermacher. His view of the unique relation of Jesus Christ both to God and man, of the redemptive value of His work, and of the permanent and vital relationship between Him and the Christian community, has been regulative of much of the best thought on the subject since his day. In spite of all the defects of his presentation of Christ it is still true to say of Schleiermacher that "he was the first modern theologian to write a definition of Christianity in which the name of its Founder occupies the central place." At the same time it must be admitted that his Christology is not always consistent with his theology. It is difficult, *e. g.*, to reconcile the archetypal nature of Christ as the ground of the redemption of men with his general view of the omnipotence of God. His system has also suffered from the fact that Strauss and other radical theologians came under its influence and carried some of its premisses to conclusions very different from

those at which Schleiermacher himself aimed. As Ritschl says : [1] "However powerfully, therefore, this work has drawn and moved men's spirits, it does not admit of doubt that the more energetic souls have made use of the one or the other pole of the fundamental propositions brought together in the work as *points d'appui* for utterly heterogeneous developments of theology, and that the others, who persevere in the middle course contemplated by Schleiermacher, have indeed appropriated to themselves many of his ideas, but yet at the same time have adopted very diverse bases for systematic theology." True as this is, however, it must be regarded as but a further illustration of the fact that while Schleiermacher founded no school he did give a powerful and lively impulse to theology, however various the forms in which it found expression.

This, again, is especially the case with regard to his doctrine of Redemption. Generally speaking, he is put down as having given further currency to the Abelardian view of the Atonement and as having been a pioneer of the more modern form of the subjective theory. This is true, but it is not the whole truth. To begin with, Schleiermacher made a notable step in advance when he sought to interpret Christianity in terms of the redemptive work of Christ. To have expounded it as a religion of redemption

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 495.

rather than of revelation, and to have done so at that time, was to make a real, lasting, and most necessary contribution to the understanding of the Christian faith. Ritschl, who is nothing if not critical of Schleiermacher, describes his position with perfect justice as follows : [1] " By Jesus and in Christianity, redemption has become operative as a principle for the moulding of the devout self-consciousness, which does not take its shape from a legally enjoined doctrine and constitution, but from the never-ending value of the Redeemer for the society founded by Him. The ideal contents, and the definite historical form of this religion, thus coincide in such a way that the thought of redemption prevails in every devout Christian consciousness, simply because the beginner of that Christian society is the Redeemer : and Jesus is the Founder of a devout society only in virtue of the fact that the members of that society become conscious through Him of their redemption." That Schleiermacher's own interpretation of the redemptive work of Christ lacks something of Christian depth and fulness does not affect the fact that he gives to it a central place in Christianity. One of the aims of his theology is to set in their true relations the work of redemption, the Redeemer, and the redeemed community. The mode in which he accomplishes this is affected by his general interpretation of religion,

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 449.

and makes him the forerunner of all those who have emphasized the subjective aspect of the Atonement in modern theology. It must always be remembered, however, that his view of redemption never rises above the removal of obstacles which prevent our attainment of the higher life.

It is this aspect of Schleiermacher's work which seems at first sight to justify the estimate which Ritschl forms of him as a theological lawgiver rather than a theologian in the strict sense of the term. "To be a lawgiver," he says, "it is confessedly immaterial whether subsequent generations perfectly observe the law or partly depart from it." Schleiermacher's work was epoch-making because he laid down the lines on which theology should proceed as a systematic study. Says Ritschl again:[1] "I am very far from undervaluing his effort to separate religion from objective knowing, and from moral acting, and to place it in a position of superiority as a peculiar subjective function over these activities so far as they have religious value. And even if his exposition of these relations does not offer the solution of the problem, to have proposed it is at all events of pre-eminent consequence." Ritschl lays great stress on the fact that Schleiermacher found in the Christian fellowship a social expression for his theology and especially for his doctrine of redemption. It is his insistence

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 443.

on the social character of the activities of the human spirit which is its chief characteristic, and it is because this is ethical rather than purely theological in its implications that Schleiermacher's influence on theology had, according to Ritschl, already begun to decline.

This is, at best, but a partial and one-sided estimate of Schleiermacher's work. The men who owed their inspiration to him, and in whom many of his ideas fructified, were by no means uncritical followers either of his method or of his system. But to say this is not in any sense to detract from his influence. On the contrary, it was with him, as with Ritschl himself, that his influence was in some cases most potent with the men who differed most widely from his conclusions. The real effects of his work are not seen at their best in his immediate successors, men like Alex. Schweizer, Rothe, Nitzsch and Lücke, but in Ritschl, Herrmann and a host of others to whom his teaching came in a mediated, secondary, but none the less effective form. And this result has made itself felt not merely in the form of their theological teaching and method, but in the very substance of their teaching and above all in their spirit. If Schleiermacher did nothing else he breathed a new life into the dry bones of Protestant theology, and gave a new impulse to the study and exposition of Christian doctrine. His general influence has been well

characterized by A. Dorner as follows: "If we consider the mediative influence of Schleiermacher's standpoint we cannot wonder at his being followed by theologians of the most varied type: first and foremost by those who, like Twesten, based the independence of theology on the experience of salvation, and (in a different way) by Alex. Schweizer, who at the same time earned a name through the thoroughness of his historical investigations. On the contrary, there were others who found that although a rational content be given in experience, the truth of the content of experience could also be perceived, and they superadded speculation to Schleiermacher's standpoint. This was shown clearly in their endeavour to develop the doctrine of God which in Schleiermacher had been specially borne down through the discordance between the testimonies of experience and of speculation. On the one hand he gave expression to all kinds of experiential testimonies concerning God, while on the other he averred that the finite nature of our concepts, which always remain contradictory, made a real concrete knowledge of God quite impossible. The speculative theologians, following Hegelian suggestions as to method, sought either to attain a theistic idea of God by the help of ethic categories (I. A. Dorner, Rothe and others), or were disposed rather to uphold the divine Immanence, bringing

Schleiermacher's standpoint of Feeling into connection with the consciousness of oneness with God (O. Pfleiderer)."

To sum up—Schleiermacher's claim to originality rests in the first instance on his treatment of religion. He did not merely isolate it from philosophy and morality, but treated it as a living reality in the development of the human race. With him religion is always, as it were, religion in action, a definite and fruitful experience arising in the soul of the individual and issuing in a great social fact. It communicates itself in an immense variety of ways, but fundamentally it is always the same, and its fruit may be reckoned upon. Schleiermacher's function in religious philosophy was in supplying that critical analysis of religion which should justify it as naturally and authentically derived from the life of the human soul, and should separate it from the accretions which have gathered round it in the course of history. He sets himself to distinguish between experience and history in religion, between its action on and in the individual, and on and in the society which it forms. The whole course of theology since his day may, therefore, be regarded as at once a comment on and a deduction from his method and his work. The new emphasis on experience, the wider application of the historical method, and the more careful systematization of Christian doctrine may all be traced to the impulse which he

first gave. The great revival in the study of Schleiermacher which is at present in process, and the flood of literature to which it has given rise is eloquent testimony to the place he occupies in theological development. In all attempts at theological reconstruction, and in the necessary effort to re-write the philosophy of religion in terms of the new psychology, he is a force to be reckoned with. Neander's judgment upon him at his death remains true: "We have lost a man from whom will be dated henceforth a new era in the history of Theology."

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